

SIX DAY PROPHECY SEMINAR

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DAY 1—THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

INTRODUCTION—Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar. I'm Richard Kindig of Christianity Tomorrow, sponsor of the seminar, and I'd like to welcome you. David Rice of San Diego, California, is your presenter.

You know, everybody wants to know about the future, and they're willing to pay for a knowledge about the future. It's a tremendous business—futurism—all of the psychic people and all of the people that try to foretell stock market and everything else. What we're focusing on tonight is the Word of God. The first thing we should think about when we try to go to the Word of God to learn about the future is that in Deuteronomy 29:29 Moses said, The secret things belong to God, but that which is revealed belongs to us and to our children. So, what we're trying to focus on here is what's been revealed about the future in the Word of God. We're not here to be prophets or to have visions. We're here to study God's Word and to try to understand what it says, what it has revealed.

It is revealed, but it is not necessarily on the surface. It takes study and some prayer and some time at best, and that's what we're going to start to do tonight.

Prophecy occurs in almost every book of the Bible. I can hardly think of a book of the Bible without prophecy within. The important features of God's plans and purposes are repeatedly foretold in the Bible—not just in one or two places, but in many places. Also, in addition to the actual predictions that are contained in the Bible, there are many things (especially in the Old Testament) that were types and shadows, pictures of the things that would unfold, future events, that when we look at the historic events we can see the future events unfolding.

There is a hunger and thirst for clear and unambiguous understanding of what these prophetic features of the Bible are. That's what we're trying to tap into tonight, at this seminar.

What are the ground rules of our investigation? Well, we're going to stand clear of sectarian labels. We're going to stay away from un-Biblical phrases and jargon—even ones that you may be comfortable with—for example, the rapture—things that aren't actually words found in the Bible. We're going to try to quote Bible concepts in Bible words.

We're not going to quote any interpretive authorities. David will turn to history to verify when certain things happened. He will focus on God's Word alone. That's the only authority we are acknowledging in this study.

We are also going to welcome all who trust in the atoning blood of Christ, and we feel that anybody who has made Jesus the Lord of their life, no matter what your denominational affiliation, we feel that you are our brother and you are our sister, and our common ground is Christ.

Also, one last point: those of you who are here who aren't already Christians, we don't want you to feel that there's any pressure in that direction, either. Faith is the decision to respond to the logical implications of what has been investigated. Faith is something that happens as a result of proof. Tonight, we are going to be looking at Bible proofs.

Let me introduce David. I've known David for many years—well, I'm not that old, but well, twenty-five years. He's from San Diego. He's spent his life studying Scripture, especially prophecy, history, and chronology. He has a great deal of wealth in these fields of knowledge.

DAVID—Thank you, Richard. Dear friends, I am very pleased to see you here tonight. It is my pleasure to discuss things about the Lord's Word. It's my pleasure to discuss prophecy.

I think you will remember the episode that was the first day of our Lord's contact with the disciples after his resurrection. Most of them were very apprehensive. They had heard some stories about the fact that the tomb was empty, that Jesus was gone. They had heard some women talk about the fact that he had appeared to them. But they were quite mystified by what was really going on.

The account is in Luke, the 24th chapter. You will remember the episode. You will remember that, as the two disciples were walking on the way to Emmaus, suddenly a stranger appeared with them and began to walk with them. He said, You look So downcast. What's the problem? They said, Don't you know what's been going on?

Everyone knows what's been happening these last few days in Jerusalem and Judea. And he said, What things? He knew perfectly well, but it was to draw them out.

They proceeded to explain to him the events that had transpired, and said We trusted it was he that was the Messiah.

After Jesus listened politely for awhile, the first words out of his mouth were a little bit of chastisement for them, Oh, fools and slow to believe every word that the prophets have spoken. And then you remember it says, Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he opened to them the Scriptures concerning the things pertaining to himself. —how that Christ must first suffer, and that was the big mystery to them. Christ must first suffer, and afterwards enter into glory.

I'm sure, although it's not detailed in Luke 24, that he must have turned to passages like Isaiah 53 that indicated that Jesus, the Messiah, the Redeemer, would be afflicted for our transgressions, and that he must first suffer and die as a sheep brought to the slaughter, before the chapter closes with and then he shall see the travail of his soul that he will be satisfied. But he talked to them from Scripture from prophecy, to reestablish their faith. Never was there a more wonderful use of prophecy than that first day, when their faith was still trembling: he established their faith by prophecy.

You remember they said later, Did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us in the way? We began to see how the prophecies coalesce, fit, match what had actually occurred. For the first time, because of the prophetic Word that he explained, they were able to see that what had transpired that seemed So unusual, taking his life and putting it on the cross—now it made sense as the precursor to all the glorious things that were to follow with Christ.

To us, prophecy has that kind of meaning as well. We know now, because of the testimony that's recorded in the New Testament, that Jesus had to die. He had to die as the ransom, to give his life

for the whole world in payment for the sin of father Adam. That's not a mystery to us. That we know. But it wasn't known to them, except by the testimony of prophecy that he explained and revealed to them. There are many things today that are current, things of interest and perplexity among many Christians, that prophecy is absolutely intended to bring to our attention. It will make a difference how we operate our Christian life if we know where we are in the stream of time, what responsibilities are before us, and what changes are impending in the world as the Kingdom of Christ is being prepared.

I'm going to take you back about a hundred and fifty years: There was in the United States, and another in Europe, an Adventist movement.

It really was very broad, appealing to people in all denominations that were religiously inclined to prophecy, to look at the prophecies of Daniel and to recognize that we are in the period of history when those prophecies are due to be fulfilled. They saw, as we still do today, through a glass darkly. They didn't see everything crisply. There were major disappointments. There have been with prophetic students, down through the centuries and specifically the last century and a half, dates that were set, things that were looked forward to, and disappointments that have occurred. Those disappointments were certainly foreknown by the heavenly Father. He knew that while we were looking through a glass darkly and not clearly, by faith and not totally by sight, that sometimes, in our interest, we're going to see things that we've overstated or seen things that aren't really there. That itself has proved advantageous to the Lord's plan. If it wasn't, you can bet He would have stopped it.

That's why it's good to be not overstating our prophetic conclusions, because then people are adamantly convicted about that which may not be positive is really a scriptural declaration. When it doesn't come to pass, they're disappointed, they fall away, and their faith is weakened. Those who really hold firm to the faith, hold firm to the prophecies, note the things that have transpired, that are on track, that are fulfilled properly.

We're going to note some of those tonight. That will act as a springboard to them—past, historic, proven prophecy—that the prophetic word is sure, and any disappointments can be attributed to our lack of precision. If we see positive prophecy in the Old Testament, this should be a springboard to us to be motivated to be

more careful about our interpretations on things current, or certainly things that are yet pending before us.

That's the spirit of coming to the testimony of prophecy—cautious, optimistic, intense interest, but not too much consideration for our own intelligence. We have to look back at the way the Lord has led the church through the age.

I think if all of you were to think of one prophetic book in the Bible that has captivated more attention than any, it might be the Book of Revelation. We're going to get into Revelation later in the week, but you can't start there. You have to go back to the Old Testament that Revelation is built on. If you've read Revelation, and many of you have, you probably have noticed the copious marginal references that take you back to the Old Testament. You have to understand the Old Testament background before you can jump into Revelation.

We're going to start, therefore, with the Old Testament. Tonight, we're going to be devoting ourselves largely to the Book of Daniel. The Book of Daniel is that book in the Old Testament that has such clear and precise testimony that it has been a fertile field for critics as well as Bible students—Bible students because it is so positive in fulfillment, a bulwark to their faith. Critics, because it is so positive in fulfillment that they have to discredit the book; otherwise, it's living testimony that there really is inspired Scripture.

Let us turn back to the Book of Daniel. As we begin our examination of Daniel, we want to get in our mind the comprehensive overview of the book. It's always better to start with the concept generally, and focus in on the details. You know that Daniel has twelve chapters in the book, and those twelve chapters are divided very pleasantly right in half, six and six—historical and prophetic. I don't mean there is no prophecy in the first six, but the first six are a narrative of things that Daniel and his captive friends, Israelites in Babylon, actually, personally experienced, and he narrates the episode. Among the things they experienced were Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Chapter 4, and those carry prophetic import.

Let's just diagram on the board what the Book of Daniel is about in its broad scope.

In Chapter 1, we have Daniel coming to Babylon as a captive. It explains historically when this occurred, under what circumstances it occurred, and there's factual information of great interest to us because we can document the things recorded there from secular history.

Secondly, you will remember in Chapter 2 of Daniel, you have a record of a dream that King Nebuchadnezzar himself had. We're going to look at that rather closely. You will remember that's the dream of the image of world power—it started with the head of gold, the chest and arms of silver, then brass, then the legs of iron, then the feet of iron and clay. We'll call that the image, and we'll get to that a little bit later.

Third, we have the episode of Daniel's three friends. Daniel was a man of state and responsibility. He may have been out of the territory at the time. His three friends were required to bow down to a false image and this is a testimony of their faith, the faith of the three Hebrews.

Chapter 4 is the account of another episode concerning Nebuchadnezzar, another dream he had about his madness that would occur for a period of seven undefined times. This really occurred to Nebuchadnezzar. Chapter 4 records exactly how it occurred, and that after seven times Nebuchadnezzar had his kingdom restored to him again.

Chapter 5 details the collapse of the Babylonian empire, the fall of Babylon.

In Chapter 6, you have an experience with Daniel in the lion's den. He's a very old man. It's another historical episode that occurred in his life at the very end, when he was under the Persian empire.

We're putting this out here to show you that this is historical. It's in the sequence you would expect. If you would write a narrative, you would put the earliest experiences first, trace down to the time when Daniel was an old man, and close his life.

It's not until we get to the second part of the Book of Daniel, Chapter 7, that we have Daniel's own visions. In Chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that Daniel interpreted. Daniel was serving as an inspired prophet and interpreter, but he doesn't have his own visions until you get to Chapter 7. That's why Chapter 7 goes back to some earlier experiences in Daniel's life and picks out

his own vision. This is the vision of the four beasts. We'll get to it a little bit later today.

Chapter 8, he has another vision, of two animals that represent two more empires that come to rule the earth.

In Chapter 9—we'll spend a lot of time on this, this evening. We have an intriguing prophecy that takes us from Daniel's day to the time of the coming of Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ at the first advent. The very interesting thing about this prophecy is that it's not just a prophecy that something will happen some day somewhere. A specific date is attached to the advent of Messiah. We are going to look closely at that in particular.

In Chapters 10 through 12 is a large, connected narrative that takes us from Daniel's day through to the end of history as we know it, to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ, the resurrection of the dead—a very comprehensive prophecy from Daniel to the Kingdom.

That's it. That's the Book of Daniel. It's laid out easily, briefly. What we're going to start at is this section, Daniel 10 through 12. I want to go there to show you how precisely the narrative of Daniel is constructed to give very precise information, very detailed information, very specific information, but all prophetic, all in advance, not after the fact but before the fact. If we can see good, positive evidence that this was fulfilled uniquely, that will give us a basis of confidence for the whole book's testimony. I think most of you who are here tonight already have that basis of confidence, but we'll start at the beginning, anyway.

Let's go to Daniel, Chapter 10. As most of these visions are, they're dated very specifically. All of these are factual occurrences; and, if they are, why not give the facts of the situation in back of them? So we have it; it's very specific. It was the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, a thing was revealed unto Daniel. Daniel didn't understand it. It says that Daniel mourned for three weeks, twenty-one days. He went without food fasting—probably some water, but no food, because of his earnestness to know what it was that God had testified by this prophecy. He didn't grasp the meaning.

Twenty-one days later, Gabriel comes to give him an understanding of the vision. We're going to skip through Chapter 10 down to the end. Notice, at verse 21, here's Gabriel speaking: I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture, and only

Michael your prince knows these things with me. In Chapter 11, the angel Gabriel now begins to tell Daniel exactly what's going to happen from his time forward. Starting verse 2, Chapter 11, I will show you the truth. Behold there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than they all. And by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.

Point Number One: Let's see where Daniel was on the stream of history. We read, in Chapter 10, that it was in the reign of Cyrus, the third year of his reign. And he says, There will stand up yet four kings—three more kings in Persia, and then he refers to the fourth after that. There are many more kings of Persia than three or four. He's just saying, I'm going to focus on the fourth king to come.

The next king was the son of Cyrus. His name was Cambyses. Then there was a king who lasted only a few months, name of Smerdis. After that, King Darius reigned for 36 years. There are three kings. Three kings shall rise. One, two, three. Then he said, The fourth shall be far richer than they all. His name was Xerxes. We're just drawing from history. We have nothing but a historical narrative here.

The fourth shall be far richer than they all, and Xerxes is noted by the historian Herodotus as extremely wealthy, and he's also noted for one other amazing thing that he did during his reign. That is, he gathered up all of the conscripts he could and all the wealth of his empire, and he decided it was time to go and conquer the nation of Greece. That's exactly what Daniel says he's going to do: He shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. I didn't tell you how it's going to turn out. You don't know from Daniel how the battle's going to turn out, who's going to win this battle. But you can piece it together from other scripture.

This same king, Xerxes, is the king we know by the name Ahasuerus, when you turn to the Book of Esther. Do you remember, in the Book of Esther, it says that the King Ahasuerus gathered all his nobles and had a big feast for something like six months? Herodotus records that same feast. That was the feast that was made to plan the attack of Greece.

Esther records it historically. Daniel had predicted, many years before, that this king would be very wealthy and specifically advance against Greece. The whole world expected that he would just overwhelm Greece, but what actually happened—you can get

the inference from this in the Book of Esther—he came back a broken and defeated man. He lost. Some of the most amazing battles of history were the defeat of the Persians by all these Grecian city- states, that were hardly assembled except against the one threat of Persia. Xerxes lost the campaign, but he maintained his empire. The empire continued for a long time. But Greece was not subdued.

Now look at the next thing that Daniel says in his very brief jump through history. This is Daniel, the 11th chapter, verse 3. The next thing you read is, A mighty king shall stand up that shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will. Who is the next mighty king who rose up? The next mighty king—all these were powerful kings—but the next mighty king who rose up in a turn of the empire (as we'll see, all of the prophecies of Daniel talk about the sequential empires that would come to rule) —the next empire was the Grecian empire that Xerxes had failed to nip in the bud. In another 150 years or so, Alexander the Great came, and Greece became the next world empire.

What happened when Alexander conquered the world? You remember the story: He was a young man, he was twenty when he started to conquer the world. He conquered the world in the short space of thirteen years. He was thirty- three when he accomplished his efforts, and then he gave way to dissolute living.

I think he perished by an overdose of alcohol, basically, and some disease. By 33, he was dead! At 33, the strongest emperor the world had ever known died with only a baby son to take over. He just wasn't sufficient to the task. What happened was—unlike all the other episodes, where a son or a strong man took over—unusual. This world empire of Greece was divided into four pieces by his four generals. It was divided into Egypt, Syria or Palestine, Thrace, and Greece. That's exactly what the prophecy said was going to happen.

The next verse says, When he shall stand up (Alexander), his kingdom will be broken (at his death). It shall be divided to the four winds of heaven. Not according to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up even for others besides those.

We're going to stop our examination of Daniel 11 right there. Keep on going, and it gets a little more complex. The point we want to make is simply this: Daniel, living way back here, early in the reign of Cyrus, was able to predict that the fourth king following

would be a king that would go against Greece. He was able to predict that the next world empire to rise (which turned out to be Alexander, the Grecian kingdom that he didn't conquer here) would, at the death of that first ruler, be split into four pieces and none of those pieces would go to his posterity. That's extremely unusual, and it exactly happened.

Now, for the sake of those that—some of you have read this before, and you're familiar with this—but the four generals of his army that split up his kingdom were (I'll just put them on the board here) Ptolemy in Egypt (ever after that you hear about many, many Ptolemys that come to reign; they're all descendants of this Ptolemy who was a general of Alexander the Great); Seleucids in Palestine and Syria. (Those two kings kept going back and forth, back and forth; and, if you can picture the Middle East in your mind, here's Egypt down here, here's Syria up here, there's Israel there. Those two kings kept going back and forth, fighting each other, and God's people Israel were traversed up one side and down the other for hundreds of years. That's what Daniel 11 continues to record, and the details are quite copious; we won't go through them.) Up here in Greece and in Thrace, you had two more. You had Cassander and Lysimachus.

There's no time prophecy involved in this part, but there's a very detailed unraveling of exactly what has transpired in history from Daniel's day forward. It's clear but ambiguous. It covers things you would not anticipate. For instance, he named Greece when nobody would have expected Greece to be the next empire. He named the fact that four divisions of the empire would take place, none to his posterity, a very amazing predicament.

The Book of Daniel gives a thought repetitively. It gives you more than one vision for the same things occurring. This makes you sure that you got the point, that you got the right interpretation of it.

In Daniel, the 8th chapter, he likens some of these empires to different animals. In Daniel, the 8th chapter, it says (it's in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar; Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon before Cyrus. That was before even the Persians had taken over.) he sees two animals. He sees a ram in verse 3, and then he later sees a goat that is going to run into this ram and destroy it and overpower it. Then he says, in verse 20—I just want to get to the interpretation: The ram which you saw (which had two horns) are the kings of Media and Persia. There he predicted, a few years ahead of time, that the Persians and the Medes (that were both ruled by Cyrus) would be the next conquering kingdom. Then

he says, in verse 21: The goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, four stood up for it. Four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

I go there, just briefly, to show how Daniel has predicted the same thing in two different sets of prophecy, two different ways of expressing it, two different symbolisms altogether, and yet the message is equally clear in both cases. He predicted exactly the same thing would happen: After Medo- Persia would conquer Babylon, Greece would come. After the first king, four divisions of the empire would occur, after the first strong leader was killed.

What we've said so far has been at a fairly rapid clip. I want to make sure that if you have questions, you want to stop, ask, clarify, please feel free to do that. Dick said, try to stump me. I didn't tell him to say that. But if you do have questions, please feel free to introduce them. If it's not interactive to some extent, you may miss a point and miss the train of thought.

All I've tried to elucidate so far is simply that Daniel is extremely credible, for 150 years after the time he lived. Any particular comments?

You might wonder, at this point, how in the world critics could possibly look at this evidence and not agree that there is evidence of divine foreknowledge through the prophet. The answer is simple: They dispute the fact that Daniel really lived at this point at all. The critics look at the same passages that you and I have looked at tonight, and the critics say, This is so obviously a fulfillment of prophecy, and it is, it is so specific, it could only have been done by somebody who was living after the fact, after the Grecian empire had fallen, and was looking back on history and wrote a forged document. It is so clear in its prophetic testimony and its meaning, that that's the only option. You have two choices—total fraud or inspired testimony.

Now, I like those kinds of choices, where they're absolutely stark. There was a gentleman I once worked with. I liked him very much. He was a kindly gentleman. In the business with which I was working at the time, he was a handyman. We used to ride out on some errands from time to time. He was a jovial fellow. We talked frequently. I enjoyed his company. But on one occasion, he said something that was rather peculiar. He looked at his hand, and said, You know, that hand has been demolished in combat, and the doctors have restored it. Most of the hand is not flesh, but plastic. I

looked, and thought, It surely doesn't look plastic to me. It looks like flesh. He went on and on, and he made the point So radical that there was no getting around it. Either this was the most marvelous feature of medical science, or he was making up a story. It turned out, in experiences later, that he was prone to make up stories. But it's one of those things you hear, and if right it's remarkable or it's a fraud, one or the other.

It's kind of like the testimony of Jesus: Jesus was either what he claimed to be, the Son of God, come down from above, to ransom humanity, or he was a fraud, pure and simple. The choice is stark. I accept the choice that he was indeed the Son of God. The evidence is compelling there, and we'll see evidence tonight—compelling to that point. That's the way we have it in the Book of Daniel. The evidence is very stark. The choices are very discreet. Either it's inspired testimony or it's a fraud. The critics have to push the issue of fraud.

I've been corresponding recently with a man named Everett Hatcher. I've never met him in my life, but I've corresponded with him, because years ago I corresponded with a critic and the critic has corresponded with him, and he's put us two in touch. He's been writing articles defending the integrity of the Book of Daniel. In the last article he wrote, published in *The Skeptical Review*, a skeptical paper which wants to look at both sides, I was quite intrigued that the latest scholarly opinion has been shifting to the view that those six chapters have So much internal evidence of being written by a Jew in Babylon at this time in history that they are no longer comfortable disputing the integrity of that part of Daniel. They still dispute this part of the Book of Daniel. We're making progress. We're halfway there. I'd just welcome them to come all the way and join us with the other part of Daniel. They can't, though, because it would prove divine inspiration.

Now we're going to go to a prophecy in Daniel, in the second part of Daniel, in the 9th chapter. It is So clear in its meaning, we can test it. It's a prophecy that applies to the coming of Messiah himself. Everyone, even the most severe critic, can never dispute the fact that Daniel was composed intact, as we have it, centuries before the appearance of Jesus Christ. If we can point to a prophecy in that book which pinpoints the year of the appearance of Jesus, the skeptics still won't be satisfied.

They don't believe in Jesus. In that, they're fixed. But, to those who have faith in Christ, it is absolute demonstration that the whole book is precise, thorough, and correct.

It will do more for us than that. It will also tell us about how God puts prophecies—time- prophecies—into the Bible that will be the predicate for helping us to understand the time- prophecies that reach farther into the future, down to our day, some past, some contemporary, and some unfolding still in the future. Therefore, it's with great interest that we're going to turn now to Daniel, the 9th chapter, and focus in on this one particular prophecy.

If we have time this evening, we might back up and look at some of the others. It may be that this is going to be of such interest that we'll just focus on this. We'll see how the time goes.

The 9th chapter begins in verse 1, in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes. You may think—on the chart here, we have a Darius. Is that the one to whom this scripture is referring? No. This is somebody who was a subordinate ruler under Cyrus. This is one of the perplexing things to which the critics point. They demand to know, who was Darius the Mede? We have looked carefully at that question, and we think there are two viable possibilities: One is, some suppose, some good Christian, Bible- believing people, suppose that Darius the Mede was another name for Cyrus the Great. Cyrus had Median blood and Persian blood in him. That conclusion is possible. I favor the view that Darius the Mede was really the general who conquered Babylon on behalf of Cyrus. He's the one who really took over, that night, and became the Deuteronomy facto ruler, and he got his authority from Cyrus.

Either way, we're right here at the transition between the Babylonian and the Persian empire when this prophecy is given.

Why was Daniel specifically praying at this time? This is unlike some of the other prophecies where the prophet just got a vision. He wasn't expecting it, he was asking for it; God just thought it was a good time to give him a vision. This is much different. Daniel, Chapter 9, is in response to a specific prayer by the prophet Daniel. The fact is that he was right here, at the end of the Babylonian empire. He'd been a captive way back here. Now we're here, at the first year of the Persian empire.

Daniel knew that the prophecy said that after seventy years had transpired for the Babylonian empire, God would judge that nation (Babylon) and he would bring his people back to Israel. Daniel is all primed now. Seventy years were to transpire and then Babylon would be judged. Daniel has already seen that Babylon was judged

with the collapse of their empire. Now, he's desperately imploring the Lord, Is it time now for us to go back?

That's what Daniel's whole passion was about, the restoring of God's people of Israel to their land. That's the background of this prophecy.

But, as God often does, He answers more than just the question we have at hand. God took it upon Himself, through the angel, to answer more than that. What the prophecy that we're going to see is telling us, is not only about the restoration of Israel back to their land, but then what would happen and how many years it would be until finally the Deliverer of Israel would come and deliver them thoroughly, all the willing and obedient, at the time of Messiah's first advent.

Let's get in to this prophecy that predicts the year of the coming of Messiah. We're going to turn past halfway through the chapter, to verse 23. Verse 23 says: The angel tells Daniel, At the beginning of your supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision. Here is the vision that Daniel is given, the testimony of the angel: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city (that would be Jerusalem. That's what he is so interested in—Jerusalem, the restoration.) To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness. This was going way beyond what Daniel had asked for. This was going to the fulfillment of all their hopes. To seal up the vision and the prophecy, to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be—Then he tells him how long it will be. We're going to stop there for a moment.

Stop and look at what he's already said, So we can get our focus on what the rest of the answer is going to be about. The prophecy opens by saying that God has appointed to His people Israel seventy weeks, and it's going to bring in everlasting righteousness, and it's going to take you to the Messiah. You know who that was. That was Jesus. He brought in everlasting righteousness by dying on the cross.

Did seventy weeks from anywhere in Daniel's area take you to Jesus' time? When did Daniel live? Daniel lived during the time of the Babylonian empire, and the episode we're reading now in

Chapter 9 has its standpoint at the time when Persia has overwhelmed Babylon. That occurred in the year 539 in October, that the Babylonian empire fell to the Persians. That's one of those dates in history that it seems everybody is agreeable to, and there's no question about that. That's why we've declared it So emphatically, 539. The first year of the new monarch would have been after Nisan of the next year, when year 1 begins; and that would be 538. That is the period of history, approximately, when Daniel is talking.

If we were to take 70 weeks from that time—a week is seven days; 70 weeks would be 490 days. That's not even two years. That's just like a year and less than a half.

How could a year and a half take us from Daniel's day 500- plus years into the future to the time of Messiah? It can't, obviously. Was Daniel disappointed about this? Was Daniel expecting 70 weeks literally? He was not. As a matter of fact, it's So clear that Daniel was expecting these to be weeks of years that some translations actually translate it just that way. The Rotherham translation—Joseph Rotherham was a Christian, who had a Jewish background; he was well qualified to translate from Hebrew therefore, for us, the Old Testament. He translated, weeks of years. Just about every commentator you're going to look at, concerning this passage, agrees that the point is that these are weeks of years. 490 years is the passage of time that is referred to here.

Most Christians would say, That's the only hypothesis that's going to work, So I'll take it on face value. We want to go back and give you some support, as to why Daniel knew enough to understand it that way—why this concept of every day for a year was something that was very familiar to Daniel. He would not have been perplexed about it. We're going to turn back to the Book of Numbers, the 14th chapter, way back to the episode when Israel, having been delivered by Moses, was on the verge of coming into the Promised Land and getting all the blessings that Moses had promised to them—that God had promised through Moses.

You know what happened: They got to the Promised Land in about a year's time—it really wasn't such a long journey. When they were ready to go in, they sent twelve spies into the land, one from each tribe, and they were there for forty days. Most of them brought back a bad report. Ten of them said, These people in the land are like giants. We seem like grasshoppers. The cities have walls built up to heaven. There isn't any way we're going to conquer these people. So God said (to paraphrase grossly), Oh, ye

of little faith, I'm giving you every prospect for your own country. I'll drive them out before you. Just exercise a little faith! That's all you need. But the people wouldn't go because of those ten false reporters. Ten people gave what they thought was the report in their eyes, but with no faith at all.

There were two others who came back with a good report—Joshua, you remember, and Caleb. They were men of faith. They came back and said, Oh, they're big, and the cities are tall, but God is on our side. Nobody can defend against the heavenly Father, against Jehovah. Come in and take the land. But all the people said, No. We'll all die. You know what God said: For every day that those spies were in the land, as punishment you're going to be one year wandering in the wilderness. Here's the verse: Numbers, the 14th chapter, verse 33. Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of days in which you searched the land, each day for a year, shall you bear your iniquities forty years, and you will know my breach of promise, because of your lack of faith.

What a punishment! Forty years, in accord with as many days as they had wandered in the wilderness. We only point to this to show that there is a connection the heavenly Father is making beginning way, way back between a day and a year. I believe that's the answer here to the seventy weeks' prophecy. It's seventy weeks of years. Every normal day would be a year in its fulfillment.

But, we have more than just one witness here. We have to have more witnesses than this. We're not sure, you know, that this is intended to apply to prophecy. It's just a good first step.

Let's go to a prophecy, a prophecy that's very close to the Book of Daniel. It's the Book of Ezekiel, where again it is unambiguously clear that in prophetic matters this is what God intends.

Ezekiel, Chapter 4. It's kind of a long narrative, but let's start with verse 4. God tells Ezekiel to do a very strange thing. He is supposed to lie on his side for a long period of time. Verse 4 says, Lie thou upon thy left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity according to the number of the days, 390 days. So shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have accomplished them on thy left side, then lie over

on your right side. And you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have appointed thee each day for a year.

He's definitely making a comparison of a day for a year here. He tells Ezekiel to lie on one side for 390, on the other side for forty. We have a total, then, of 430 days in which Ezekiel has to lie on his side. If you think it's asking a little much for somebody never to get up for 430 days, you're right. I don't think it means, Lie there and never get up. I think it just means, Lie there, and when you have to get up to eat and other things, get up. But then, lie back down.

For all these days, he's a witness, a sign, a testimony to the Israelites that God is doing something, making a picture, a lesson, to them to understand. What is that lesson? The lesson is that, for as many years as you lie on your side in days, you're going to be punished for your past iniquities. The punishment was just starting in Babylon, but it wasn't going to be for just seventy years here. One form or another of your punishment is going to keep on going for 430 years.

Are we able to trace that 430 years of punishment through history? If we can, if we can trace those 430 years, then we have a clear example in Daniel's own contemporary, Ezekiel—they were contemporaries, both in Babylon; Daniel preceded him a little bit, but they were contemporaries. We'll have an example of fulfilled prophecy of a day for a year, that's unambiguously clear.

Who could deny then, that Daniel's prophecy about So many days of weeks would be a day for a year? It would be fairly clear. Can we find a direct fulfillment to Ezekiel's prophecy?

We have to turn to the date that is given to the prophecy itself. Ezekiel the 4th chapter is a continuation of Chapter 3, which is a continuation of Chapter 2, which (you already know what I'm going to say) is a continuation of Chapter 1. You have to go back to Chapter 1 to know the date of this event.

Ezekiel, Chapter 1, verse 1, says: In the 30th year of—(we'll skip over that—we'll get back to that later in the week—that's an intriguing question, 30th year) in the fourth month, the fifth day of the month, I was among the captives by the River Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw the visions of God.

In the fifth day of the month which was (and here's the date) the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the Lord

came expressly to Ezekiel, and you read all the stuff that we read. And in Chapter 4 it's the same date. The date of the beginning of the 430 years of Israel's punishment is the date of the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. That's when Ezekiel became a captive. So that meant a lot to him. He went captive in Jehoiachin's captivity. In the year of that captivity is when this prophecy of 430 days or years of punishment is said to come.

Can we date the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity? If we were to read back in Kings and in Chronicles and in Jeremiah, you would see that it's fairly easy to locate. We'll go back to this king, Nebuchadnezzar. You remember that king. When I was a boy, that long name was a mouthful, but I never forgot it once I got it.

King Nebuchadnezzar was the king that defeated Israel, and took the captive Daniel and Ezekiel to Babylon. He didn't take them all in one fell sweep. They went in three separate deportations, exoduses. Daniel went in the very first year of Nebuchadnezzar, in his accession year. You'll see that in Daniel, Chapter 1, verse 1. It says, in the Chronicles and in the Kings that Jehoiachin, the next king that came along, went captive in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. Another verse says it was the seventh year; that's a little discrepancy we'll get to, later.

We have to find when the end of the seventh year, the beginning of the eighth year, would have been. Very interestingly, we have a double evidence on this point. Scriptures tell us that it was in the seventh/eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar; that's in Kings and Chronicles. Fortunately, in our day we've actually had archeologists go to the Holy Land—well, this is Iraq, Babylon, the unholy land—and they've dug up the tablets from old Babylon and they found the first-hand records of the same thing the Bible said. They actually have a tablet which identifies the day, the month, and the year in Nebuchadnezzar's reign when Nebuchadnezzar left Babylon.

That was when he journeyed to Israel to take them captive again, in the second captivity. The tablet is dated unambiguously the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar. He comes into Israel and tells you the very day that he took Jehoiachin, the king of Judah (Judah) captive. The whole thing is dove-tailed both in the scriptures and in the first-hand records of Babylon.

This wasn't someone who wrote a history of Babylon 500 years later. These were the original tablets that the scribes wrote to commemorate this. We have a double evidence. We know exactly

when it occurred. It occurred at the end of the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar. His year turns, not in January as ours does. His years turned in Nisan, the spring, the Passover season. The beginning of the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar was when he took his Ezekiel captive. That is the year of 597—597 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar, in the end of the seventh, the beginning of his eighth year, took captive Jehoiachin.

The Hebrews didn't count time like the Babylonians did. The Babylonians started their years in the spring. The Hebrews started their years in the fall—the month of Tishri. To this day, if you look on a Jewish calendar, it's the oddest thing in the world; it's strange. You look for New Year's Day on a Jewish calendar, and you find it in Month Seven, Day One. That's New Year's. To this day, Rosh Hashana is Month Seven, Day One.

In the Hebrew reckoning, this would be the year they went captive—the year 598 in the fall, to 597 in the fall. That would be the first year of their captivity. The next year would take you to 597 in the fall, 596, 595, 594. 594 B.C. would be the date of this vision that Ezekiel had.

429 years in the future, counting the first and the last, brings you to the year 165- 164, from the fall to the fall. What happened in the year 165- 164 B.C. that has anything to do with this prophecy? That was the fateful year that the Maccabee revolt of Israel took place. For the first time in hundreds of years, Palestine was freed (temporarily) from the oppressive burden of foreign governments. They minted their own coins. They had their own king. They had their own appointment of high priest. They were an independent nation, though very briefly, during this period in the aftermath of the Grecian empire.

You may remember the story. Hanukkah, to this day—Hanukkah, the Jewish celebration is in celebration of the time when the Maccabees revolted against the residue of the old Grecian empire, made their country independent, and were faithful to God again. That Maccabean revolt is actually prophesied in Scripture. Here it's the year. But let's turn real quickly and show you one text that prophesies it.

This text actually prophesies that this would occur by God's authority. It's the Book of Zechariah, the 9th chapter, verse 13. The first part of Zechariah covers this, too, but verse 13 is explicit. When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made

thee as the sword of a mighty man, and verse 16, The LORD their God shall save them in that day as a flock of His people.

The Lord gives them this victory. The Maccabees' revolt was blessed by God. It wasn't just a flash in the pan. It was brief, it was temporary, but it was God-ordained. That's exactly 430 years after their punishment began. The punishment of being under the heel of foreign oppressors was going to last until the Maccabee revolt. That happened exactly right.

Everybody knows that Ezekiel was written way before 165. I don't even know any critic that would dispute that point. It's a clear fulfillment of the prophecy of Ezekiel. Our purpose is to show that it is a clear fulfillment of a day-for-a-year prophecy. We thought, back in Numbers the 14th chapter, maybe it would work. Now we know it works.

So, when we go to the Seventy Weeks' Prophecy, we have good evidence to show that that seventy weeks is seventy weeks of years. I just want to give you one more hint about this—one more little evidence for this. It suddenly came up a couple of years ago, and I was quite delighted and surprised.

Going back to Daniel, where we started—Daniel the 10th chapter, verse 1. We started with this a long time ago. In the third year of Cyrus, the thing was revealed to me. —In those days, verse 2, I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. Three weeks is 21 days. Three weeks, he was fasting. You go down a little further to verse 13. The angel says, I would have been earlier (I left right away) but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days, but Michael, chief of the first princes (better translation) came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

21 days that angel was delayed giving Daniel the response to his question. If you go a little further, you'll find that it was all about rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple, and so forth. I was quite amazed. When we see an angel delayed for 21 days, couldn't God snap His fingers and shut that down to zero seconds if He wanted? He has the power. There's something meaningful in this 21-day delay to the answer to Daniel's prayer about the temple.

It just so happens that 21 years after that prayer was given—that was the third year of Cyrus—the first year started in the year 538—second year, 537—third year, 536. Go 21 years ahead in history, and you get to the year 515 B.C. Now, go to Ezra 6:15,

that says: God's temple at Jerusalem was finished in the sixth year of Darius, 515 B.C.

It turns out exactly the year 515 B.C. The temple was finished after a 21- year delay, and that was hinted by the 21- day delay of the angel giving the answer to Daniel. Those are little gems. If you dispute that and say, The Bible doesn't say that was exactly the correspondence, I'll say, You're right, but to me it just fits So nicely. It's like another bolster—a feather in our cap—to show us we're on the right track. A day represents a year in prophecy. As we are going to see in the next nights of our studies, that is a crucial key to unfolding the events that are happening in our epoch of history.

Now, we ought to go back and see how this fits the Seventy Weeks' prophecy. That's the nut we're trying to crack for tonight. Let's go to Daniel, chapter 9, and see what this prophecy is going to say about the Seventy Weeks' prophecy, and precisely how it was fulfilled.

Whenever you get to prophecies that are time- prophecies, we have a great deal to gain, and a great jeopardy we encounter. The great deal we can gain is that it's So specific. Imagine if I told my wife, One of these days I'm going to get you a nicer house and care for you better. She'd say, Give me a date, would you? I'd say, O.K. 1999, January 14, we'll be moving into a new house. Mark that down on your calendar. You can bet she'd hold me to it. I wouldn't dare say that, because she would hold me to it. But that's the point. It's very specific. And that's what's happening in the prophecy. It's not just saying, Some day, you're going to have the Messiah. It's saying precisely. That's the great benefit we have with this prophecy. It locks it down.

The jeopardy is, when you go to apply this, many Christians have read this passage and have made an interpretation before they had the facts. You can read prophecy, as is almost always the case, different ways. Prophecy is susceptible to interpretation. Facts can't change. If this prophecy is going to take us from some fixed point which Daniel defines to the appearance of Christ Jesus our Lord, the Messiah, then we'd better pin down the facts about when Jesus came. We have to know when Jesus really did come.

This, unfortunately, is sometimes a disputed point. I'm pleased to announce that, in our day, the disputation is narrowing and I think it's congealing. There's not as much disputation as there was in former years. A hundred years ago, when people were dealing with

these issues, there was quite a range for the dates of the appearance of Jesus on earth. The first task we have to allot to ourselves is to define when did Jesus actually appear. Get the facts pinned down first. Then go back and see how the prophecy blended miraculously to the facts.

When did Jesus appear? He appeared during the reign of Pontius Pilate. That we all know. The Gospels are very clear. He died under Pilate. Pilate can be pinned down under Roman history, because he was a Roman governor. Pilate was governor of Judea from the year 26 A.D. to the year 36 A.D.

(By the way, do you know what happened to Pilate? He committed suicide in disgrace.) You don't often hear about that, you don't wish that kind of thing on anybody, but it's interesting to know how providence marked out the course of the one that did not stand for righteousness at the time Jesus was put to death.

Some time during that period, Christ approached John the Baptist at Jordan, and subsequently was put to death.

When, during this period of time, did he die? According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus died at the time of Passover, whatever year it was. Some of you may be accustomed to checking, from time to time, as to when the Passover date does fall. You can look on the Hebrew calendar, and you can find the Passover date will fall—Nisan 14, or the Feast of Passover, Nisan 15—on a variety of days of the calendar—Monday, Tuesday I think there are two days on which it cannot fall, because of the rules of the calendar; but it will fall on a variety of days. One of the days upon which it rarely falls, Nisan 14, when they killed the lambs, is Friday; but it does, from time to time. It did, in the Gospel accounts.

You will remember that it was Friday when our Lord was put on the cross, Nisan 14. The next day was the 15th, the Feast, that was the Sabbath. Early in the morning of the 16th, Jesus was raised from the dead, and the women visited the tomb and saw the empty tomb. In the year Jesus died, Nisan 14 on the Jewish calendar was a Friday. Our task is narrowing. All we have to do is to find out which of these ten years, or eleven years inclusive, would qualify as a year when Nisan 14 fell on a Friday.

How do you figure such a thing? You take out your pocket calculator, and you don't know what to do next. The way to calculate that is to look in a book. In a Bible Dictionary, like Unger's Bible Dictionary, you look under Passover or chronology

of our Lord's life. Most accepted Christian works will give two dates for that—two possibilities. It could have been the year 30, or it could have been the year 33 A.D. Many people like the date 30, and others like the date 33.

What is of interest today is to note that, in recent years (after the publication of these views which have been long standing) there have been more precise calculations of the cycles of the moon. Today, we can eliminate one of these choices. We can eliminate the year 30 A.D. That leaves us one date for the crucifixion of our Lord, and that's the year 33 A.D., Nisan 14. According to the Roman Julian calendar, that was April 3rd, 33 A.D. That's why we feel a strong degree of confidence in this date.

How old was Jesus when he was baptized? Thirty. It's very clear, in the Book of Luke, that when he came to John to be baptized, Jesus was about thirty years old. Many people think he had a ministry of 3- 1/2 years. If both those conclusions are right, it synchronizes very nicely: he was baptized the fall of the year 29 A.D. 3- 1/2 years later, he would have been crucified in 33 A.D.

Do we know that he really had a ministry of 3- 1/2 years, or is that just kind of a popular thought that can't stand the test of time? Let's turn to the Book of John and see what it says. The Book of John, Chapter 2, verse 13: This is very early in Jesus' career. It says the Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. There's the Passover for which Jesus went to Jerusalem. That's Passover 1.

Turn to John, the 5th chapter, verse 1, and we read: After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. — Some of you know that the Greek language, in which John wrote, there is no equivalent for the word a. —It could mean a, it could not mean that. Take a out, and all this says is there was feast of the Jews. —What is the feast of the Jews? If there's only one feast that you'd call the feast of the Jews, you'd probably pick the Passover. Many people do—not everyone. Some people say this was Passover 2. Some people say, No, this was the Feast of Purim. — The Feast of Purim is almost the same time as Passover. It's the same basic season of the year. Whether this is the Feast of Purim or the Feast of Passover, it's another spring passing in Jesus' ministry.

Let's turn now to John, the 6th chapter, verse 3. This is when he was over the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberius. A great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles. Jesus went up into a

mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. —And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. —Passover 3.

The next Passover, we already know about. That's the Passover where Jesus died. Passover 4. That's it. That's a very consistent support for the concept that's very prevalent—that Jesus had a ministry of 3- 1/2 years. I think it's a correct evidence. It does fit.

We can come at this another direction. You remember that John and Jesus—I often have thought that they were cousins; they were actually sons of cousins. Mary and Elisabeth were cousins, and John the Baptist was the son of Elisabeth, and Jesus was the son of Mary. They were related.

You remember that, when Mary was pregnant with Jesus, when Mary had received the annunciation, and presumably was incipiently pregnant with Jesus, she went to visit her cousin Elisabeth who was in the fifth month. —That tells us that John was a little older than Jesus, maybe five or six months older than Jesus—about a half a year apart. Jesus began his ministry as soon as he was qualified under the Law, a man at the age of thirty under the Jewish Law. That's when priests began their service.

John the Baptist probably did the same. John was preaching before Jesus was, we know. John probably began when he was thirty, as well.

Now we have a text in the Book of Luke, which tells exactly when John began to minister. Luke, the 3rd chapter, verse 1: Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate then being governor of Judea, Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, etc., etc. Luke is very careful to give us the facts here. I am so glad he does. What we need for prophecy is facts, to nail things down. Verse 3: He (that is, John the Baptist) came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. —That's when John the Baptist began, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar.

When did Tiberius Caesar begin to reign? Who was his predecessor? The very, very famous Caesar Augustus. The date of his death is unambiguous. It was August of the year 14 A.D. We go ahead fifteen years, and we get to the year 29 A.D. The year 29 A.D. was the year John the Baptist began preaching. Jesus, it is often thought, was born in the fall of the year. His relative John would have been born six months earlier; that would have been in the spring of the year. He would have been thirty years old in the

spring of the year, as well. In A.D. 29, in the spring of the year, John the Baptist began his ministry. Six months later, 29 A.D., in the fall of the year, Jesus would have begun his ministry. Jesus died 33 A.D., he had a ministry of 3- 1/2 years.

We're coming at it both directions. You can establish the time of his death, you can establish the time of his baptism and the beginning of his ministry, and that correlates exactly with what we would deduce from the Gospel of John. He had a 3- 1/2 year ministry. I like this. You have a pin here at his death, you have a pin here at his baptism, you have a distance between, and all three factors agree. We have it locked down. You can't move it.

But there has been a disputation on this in days past. I'll show you the reason for the dispute, and then, hopefully, the answer to the dispute. (Maybe I wouldn't tell you the dispute unless I had an answer for it.) I give you both. If Jesus died at 33, and he began his ministry in 29, and he was born 30 years before that (because he was 30 years old when he was baptized), that would be the year 2 B.C. when he was born in the fall of the year. For those of you may be bewildered as to how we can go from 2 B.C. to 29 A.D. in only 30 years—2+29 sounds like a total of 31. Am I missing a year? There's 1 B.C. There's 1 A.D. There's no year 0 between them. That's why the year seems to be off, but it's really not. If you take a mid- point in 1 B.C. to a mid- point in 1 A.D., you have only one year. You'd think, when you add 1+1, that you'd get two years. Like adding 2+29, you'd think you'd get 31. It's just that you have to subtract one for that missing year 0.

The real date of Jesus' birth would be in the fall of the year 2 B.C.

The year 0 doesn't exist. There just is no year 0. It's not like when that year came everybody celebrated it as B.C. 1. That wasn't invented yet. It wasn't until about the year 600 A.D. that people said, We ought to go back and start counting time from when Jesus was born. They almost did it right. They just missed it a year. When they did that, they said, This will be the year before him, this will be the year after. —There's no year 0.

If some of you really want to get technical and look in some reference works, you might look up some astronomical dates in a book that gives you astronomy. I'll show you one, for instance. Here's a book that lists eclipses. It comes in handy, from time to time, when you're studying prophecy in some places. If you can't sleep at night, you just read this. It's a listing of eclipse data, that's all it is. When astronomers put together dates of eclipses, they

number things numerically as though there were a year 0 in between. But historians don't. If you look at a history book, it will tell you a certain date. If you look at an astronomy book, the date number will be one year different. This is a small detail, but that small detail has confused millions of people, and whole movements have been distressed by this one year difference in prophecy.

Go back to the Miller Movement of the 1800s, and you'll find it was a major consideration. They were all expecting something to happen in 1843. It didn't happen. They wrestled with this one-year period, and changed the date by a year, and it still didn't happen. They weren't quite right. It was a major concern in prophetic circles. Today—I'm going to say this with a little sadness it's just simply true. In Christianity, broadly, the same intensity—I'll except the people in this room, because you're all here—the same intensity for prophetic studies that was exhibited 150 years ago, has diminished. It is diminished because of some false expectations, until you hardly ever even hear a concern about such a minor thing as the year 0. If you really want to figure out the dates of prophecy right, you have to pay attention to it.

Jesus really was born in 2 B.C. Why doesn't everybody agree? If you look in Unger's Bible Dictionary for the Birth of Jesus, will you see 2 B.C.? Unfortunately, you won't. If you look in a more modern book, you will, because science, archeology, history is catching up. A long time ago, they thought that Herod the Great died in the year 4 B.C. Since Herod the Great was the king that tried to kill Jesus at his birth, Jesus had to be born before that. Maybe fifteen years ago, if any of you saw planetarium exhibits at the time of Christmas, they proposed to show you the Star of Christmas, the Star of Bethlehem. They would have used the date of 4, 5, 6, or even 7 B.C. to show you the Star of Bethlehem, because they thought Herod died in 4, So Jesus had to be born back here. About 32 years ago, a man named William Filmer wrote an article in the Journal of Theological Studies, published out of England, I believe it's Cambridge. He, in a very copious article, went through all the historical details, and has convincingly demonstrated that the early historians erred, and that Herod did not die in 4 B.C.

Herod died in January of 1 B.C. Jesus was born just before that, a few months, in 2 B.C. It's exactly consistent with the scriptures and all the other evidence on the point.

If any of you want to get into this detail more deeply, we can talk privately. I can send you a copy of the article; I don't have it with me. I personally have gone over that article with a fine-tooth comb because of my concern for this point, and I am unambiguously convinced they are right—Herod died in 1 B.C. It's not a new conclusion, it's just a recently-adopted conclusion. At least on the West Coast, many of the planetarium displays of modern days have switched their show to show the sky for 2 and 3 B.C. for the Bethlehem Star, instead of 4, 5, 6, or 7 B.C. Finally, Luke turns out to be right! (We always thought he was right, anyway.)

Now we have the date for the appearance of Messiah. We have the facts on this date. There's more evidence than we've talked about. People have written entire books on this, with more facts than this. But let this suffice. We have the facts about when Jesus appeared.

Now, let's go back to the prophecy in Daniel, Chapter 9, and see how that prophecy predicts the appearance of Messiah correctly. Daniel 9:24: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal the vision and prophecy, and anoint the Most Holy. —Seventy weeks, and we think those are weeks of years, for all the reasons we've stated. 490 years will take you to Messiah, and everlasting righteousness that's the death of Messiah.

When do you begin it? Does it begin exactly when the prophecy was given? It does not. Unlike Ezekiel, there is a different starting point given. We read that in the very next verse. It says: Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be—all these various weeks. We have to figure out, when is the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. When was that decree given? This has been a question, unfortunately, for which there have been three different answers.

There was a decree, given by this King Cyrus, that says, Go ahead and go back. Restore yourself to the land, re-populate the land, and they rebuilt the temple. They didn't do much building of the walls or the city, but they rebuilt the temple. Some Christians say that's the date, but they have to do some real explaining. 538 B.C. minus 490 leaves you way short of the time Christ appeared. What do Christians do who say that was the date? What they do is, they take an axe to history—an 80-year blunt instrument—and chop out 80 years. 150 years ago, who's to say? The evidence wasn't that positive, and so maybe they could speculate that historians

had erred. But today we, as Christians, as Bible prophetic students, are in the best position there ever has been to know the facts. Today, the history of the Persian empire is very, very solid.

We have evidence to document the history very, very strongly. That date just will not stand. It just doesn't fit. That's why I say, when you go to prophecy, get the facts first. Then see how the prophecy's going to fit. That date doesn't fit. What other options are there? What other options are there for this prophecy? There are two other options.

We'll show you one in Ezra, Chapter 7. Look over at the Book of Ezra—in the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Ezra, the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, ... He was a priest, So they give his genealogy. We'll just skip a little bit. Verse 6: Ezra went up from Babylon; he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, etc., unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king—that is, the king of Persia.

And he (that is, Ezra) came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. For upon the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he arrived in Jerusalem.

Verse 11: Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.

Verse 12 and forward, you have the decree. There it is, laid out in all its glory. Ezra records the decree, verse after verse, which King Artaxerxes gave, which said, Go back and rebuild. Artaxerxes gave him money from the public treasury to go back and build. What Ezra did with the money is fascinating. He first restored the temple which, after 75 years, had been dilapidated. He restored the temple, and then he went on, with the extra money, to start rebuilding the walls of the city. Ezra records this.

The enemies of Israel said, Oh, we don't want this to happen. — They sent letters of complaint, and they had the work stopped. That decree was, we suggest, the decree which gave Ezra the authority. We think that is the decree. There's another decree, also.

If you turn to the Book of Nehemiah, you'll find that Nehemiah, 13 years later, also went back and rebuilt, because the city gates were still not up, the wall was still dilapidated, because this decree from the enemies had stopped the rebuilding.

In Nehemiah, the 2nd chapter, verse 3, Nehemiah bemoans the fact that the gates are still consumed by fire. Verse 5: I said to the king (same king, Artaxerxes, just later in his reign), If it please the king, if thy servant hath found favor in his sight, that thou would send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I might build it, and the king basically said, O.K. —He was a friend of the king, and the king said, Sure, you're very discouraged, and I'll give you authority to do that.

What do we pick? The decree of Cyrus, or the decree in the seventh year of Artaxerxes that sent Ezra back, or the decree that sent Nehemiah back? If history was different, I could pick any one of those decrees and say, That's it. —But I'll tell you which one I like.

I like this one, the one that is actually spelled out in intricate detail in Chapter 7. —Here's the decree. —It says that, verse after verse after verse. —Here's the word of the king. —I think that's the decree. Now, when we test it by the inflexible standard of time, let's see what it produces.

When was the seventh year of the king Artaxerxes? According to history, in the month of Nisan, which is when the king began his reign every year—his official year began then—the seventh year would be the year 458 B.C. This isn't my date. You can get this out of any history book you care to check (that's less than 200 years old), the day for the seventh year of Artaxerxes—right out of history.

Let's see if that works or not. We have seventy weeks of years. 70×7 would be 490 years. That comes to 32. Wait a minute. Jesus didn't die in 32. It's the year 0. —That's it. That's the point. You have to pay attention to those little details of prophecy. When you're subtracting out, to get the right answer you have to add in that one year, to make up for the absence of 0, and you get the year 33 A.D.

What did the prophecy say—to bring in everlasting righteousness?— To seal up the vision and the prophecy? Everlasting righteousness. It sounds like the ransom sacrifice, to me. That's Jesus on the cross.

When did Jesus die? At Passover season. That's the month Nisan in the Jewish calendar. When was the decree given? We read it, in Ezra, Chapter 7: the month Nisan, Passover season, exactly 490 years before. Seventy weeks of years. Do you realize what this means? It means we have a prophecy in the Book of Daniel—the last part of the Book of Daniel—the part the critics dispute. It exactly identifies, hundreds of years before the fact. Everyone, even critics, will agree about this. It predicts that the Jewish Messiah would come and bring in everlasting righteousness by the year 33 A.D. This is a phenomenal, precise calculation, updated to the very latest data we have.

Somebody might say, Well, I don't know. How sure are we about Persian history? How do we really know? —I really don't think most people would say that, but you might, you might. I just have a little diagram here that will give you an inkling for some of the kinds of evidence that supports this.

Have you all seen an eclipse of the moon, from time to time? You go out at night, and you see a little corner of the moon missing. That's an eclipse going on. I remember I was overseas on some missionary work.

I had no idea what was going to happen, that eclipses were coming up. I looked outside, about ten o'clock at night, and wondered, Is that a cloud over the moon? —I kept watching. It was an eclipse! It was an eclipse that I didn't know was going to happen, but I just happened to observe it. Now, if I wanted to stay in that same spot and wait eighteen years and $2\frac{2}{3}$ days later, there'd be another eclipse. These eclipses come at eighteen- year cycles. Every eighteen years, you see another eclipse. Sometimes those eclipses will be on the other side of the world, but after the next cycle you'll see it again. They slowly fade out, because it's not precisely eighteen.

Because of that eighteen- year cycle, the ancients knew about that cycle. As a matter of fact, I told you I had a book here that lists eclipses. The last column in this book lists eclipses from 1500 B.C. to 3000 A.D., anything you're interested in knowing about lunar eclipses. The very last one tells you which of the eighteen- year cycles that eclipse pertains to. It's So bona fide, the eighteen- year cycle, that it's even listed in the table formally.

The ancients knew about that. They kept record of who was on the throne every eighteen years, and they actually made lists of rulers

who were on the throne every eighteen years. Here are two of the lists that were dug up from antiquity. One of the lists says there was an eclipse in the seventeenth year of Nabopolassar, and on that same cycle the next king is Nebuchadnezzar, the fourteenth year; Nebuchadnezzar, the 32nd year, Nabonidus the first year, Cyrus the second year, Darius the third year, Darius, 21, Xerxes, 3, Xerxes, 21, Artaxerxes, 18. Everyone of those dates is exactly 18 years apart.

We have there first- hand evidence from antiquity telling us who was on the throne at 18- year intervals. Put a tack on every one of those small circles. You can't move history apart; you can't scrunch it together. It's stable.

You have another list of them. Here's one—another sequence that started in the seventh year of Nabonidus. Next on the sequence, the eighth year of Cyrus, 9th year of Darius, 27th year of Darius, 9th year of Xerxes, 6th year of Artaxerxes, 24th of Artaxerxes. Those are 18- year cycles that are documented for us historically. You can't move Persian history. Who would want to? We have the prophecy exactly fitting.

Actually, there are reasons people would want to. Because, when you read the prophecy, it's susceptible to different interpretations. But I maintain that history and the facts tell us the interpretation. We can rejoice with the verity of the Word of God that we have a prophecy that positively locks down bona fide inspiration in the Prophet Daniel.

No critic can deny that Daniel wrote this hundred of years before Messiah. No critic can deny these facts we brought up. No critic can deny that the prophecy matches the span for which we are looking. It fits. It fits perfectly.

That shows the value of critical prophetic study.

It does more. This concept that every day represents a year in prophecy, we will see tomorrow night, forms the very kernel of prophetic testimony that is going to bring us into our epoch of history, as we look closer at the prophecies of Daniel, the prophecies of Revelation, and the time of the end that we're living in today.

That concludes our testimony for tonight. (In response to a question I could not hear): Thank you, that's a good point. Let's go back to Daniel, the 9th chapter, and let's see how the prophecy

unfolds with this view. —Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment—this is Daniel 9, verse 25: from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks.

Seven weeks. What's a score? Twenty. Threescore and two would be sixty- two. That would be a total of 69 weeks. From the going forth of the decree to Messiah the Prince would be 69 weeks. That would be 483 years. If we start in the year 458, that would take us to the date 26 A.D. How does 69 weeks, then, take us to Messiah at 26 A.D.? Messiah didn't come until 29 A.D. He didn't die until 33 A.D. This is one of the kernels of the prophecy that has caused some to apply it differently and to look for different dates.

69 weeks, it says, take you to the Messiah. The proper answer to this, I think, is to notice that the prophecy is not given actually in days. It's not given in literal days, that is literal years. If it had been, it might have said, 486 years will take you to the Messiah. — But it's not. What is the prophecy given in? Weeks. Weeks of years. How many weeks of years will transpire until finally you get to the time when Messiah will make his appearance? 69 of those weeks will transpire before Messiah finally appears. But when, exactly, will Messiah appear? Can we pin it down exactly?

Let's look a little farther in the prophecy. Verse 25: Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince will be 69 weeks. The street will be built, the wall even in troublous times (during this period) and after the threescore and two weeks Messiah will die, but not for himself. —You see what the prophecy is saying? First of all, it said that at this time Messiah would appear and he'll die. But he won't die right away.

You have to recognize that, after the 69 weeks come, then two things will happen: Messiah will be introduced, and he will subsequently die. We still don't know when, not exactly when. But we will in a moment. It will tell us exactly.

Verse 27: He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week—that will be that last week. That last week, he'll confirm the covenant of Israel back to them again, baptizing them into John, that they could be transferred into Jesus when he would come. It says, In the midst of the week, he will cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. —The midst of the week—would take you to 29

A.D. That's clear. That's 3- 1/2 years after the spring of 26. The midst of the week would be 29 A.D.

How did Jesus cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease then? Hebrews, the 10th chapter, tells us the answer. Hebrews 10:9. Paul is speaking about the fact that, in the old Law (verse 4) there was the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, but they never really worked because animals can't really atone for sin.

Verse 5: When Jesus comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body you have prepared me. — Then, verse 7: Then I said, 'Lo, I come in the volume of the book it is written of me to do thy will, O God. —That's Jesus, coming to John at Jordan to be baptized—to be the offering for sin. He would lay down his life 3- 1/2 years, during his ministry, and finally expire at Calvary. At Jordan, the passage is fulfilled.

Then Paul says, in verse 9, Then said Jesus, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.' He (Jesus) takes away the first (the old bullocks) that he may establish the second. —That's when Jesus became the sin-offering for our sins—at Jordan, when he presented his all to the Lord and said, Consume me and my sacrifice. —That's when he was figuratively laid on the altar. That's when the old Jewish Law began to fade away, until finally (3- 1/2 years later) Jesus was fully consumed and he was on the cross. Paul says, Then he laid the Law to the cross. It was at Jordan that he took away the first, the typical, that he could establish the second, the antitypical. That's where he caused the sacrifice and oblation of Law to fade away. That was the time, the midst of the week, 29 A.D. That is when Jesus began his 3- 1/2 year ministry to finally put away sin that he climaxed later in 33.

After this prophecy about Jesus, you do have something else back in the Book of Daniel, 9th chapter—something else that would unfold, that occurred in subsequent years. Let's look back at that briefly.

Da 9:26: The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Verse 27, the last part: For the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (or the desolation).

The things we just read talk about something that would happen after Jesus had died in 33. Later, the prophecy says, after he's brought in everlasting righteousness, then he would send people to destroy the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. He doesn't tell you when. He just says that after that, because of the abominations of Israel, there'll be destruction.

Was there? When the Romans came, in 70 A.D., they didn't spare. They sieged the city, they breached the walls, they burned the temple, they killed the inhabitants, they took many into slavery, and Judea was laid waste. That occurred. It occurred subsequently to the time of our Lord.

Dear friends, we're very thankful for your attention tonight. I know that the hour is late and I know the temperature is high, but I trust that the evidence of scripture and God's integrity in His Word and the integrity of inspired prophecy has been crystallized in your mind. I hope it's had that influence. It has for me—the study of these issues.

In succeeding days, we'll go deeper into our day in history to see what is actually unfolding.

DAY 2—BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF REVELATION

RICHARD KINDIG: You are blest when you read Revelation, but what does it mean? What are the seals, the trumpets, the plagues, and the bowls? What are the two witnesses, the souls under the altar, and the four different- colored horses? What are the days, hours and months? Who is the woman clothed with the sun, and who is the harlot? What is the dragon, the scarlet- colored beast, and the image of the beast? David Rice, of San Diego, California, could speak on this subject (I think) for a week. Tonight, he's going to give you an overview—something that should help you as you study the Bible yourself—to put things into perspective, and to see what the big picture is. I hope that you enjoy this second session of The Bible Prophecy Seminar, and please test it with your Bible.

DAVID RICE: Thank you, Bro. Richard, and dear friends, it's a pleasure to see you back tonight. There is nothing that I would rather do than share thoughts from scriptures with good Christian people of honest heart and conviction who are interested in the Words of Life.

I would like to start this evening with a text from our Lord's words in Matthew, the 13th chapter. It's a text which I've treasured for a long time, and many Christian people, no doubt, have. It's a passage that concludes our Lord's giving of seven parables, in Matthew, the 13th chapter.

At the conclusion of all of these parables, one or two of which we might look at more closely this evening, Jesus asks the disciples, Have you understood everything that I have said? —The disciples, perhaps a little naively, but honestly as far as they were able, said, Yea, Lord, verse 51. Verse 52: Then said he unto them, 'Therefore every scribe which is instructed into the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a man that is a householder which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Now, Jesus was referring to the words he had just been speaking, these seven parables of the Kingdom, as though to indicate that, as time would go by, his disciples that were earnest in studying the words of life would be able to draw out of his words, things new and things old things new as they became due to be understood, and things old which others had revealed and looked over and been nourished by in the past. This scripture really expresses our privilege today—our united, joint privilege, today.

I have been very, very blest, in the years of my Christian walk in having the association of many deeply- studied brethren who have been very close to me, and from whom I've learned a lot.

I want to introduce it this way to let you know that I don't stand here speaking things which are from my own cogitations. What did the Apostle tell the brethren? —What have we that we have not received? —We don't speak of our own wisdom or our own thought or of our own brilliance. What we speak to you, this evening, are things from the Word of Life that other faithful, devoted, prophetic students have sought and have gathered out from the Words of Life over centuries of time. It's been our privilege to be privy to these things through studying the writings of others, the fellowship of others, and to see (because of the advancing years in the Gospel Age) many of the harmonies which earlier brethren centuries ago could not see because it was not timely due for them.

We speak things that the Lord and the holy spirit has by many faithful students brought down through the ages for our benefit and to our attention. It's always necessary, of course, for me when I hear others, and for you, when you hear anybody speak of the

Words of Life, to think about them earnestly, as Paul said of the noble Bereans, to receive it with all readiness of mind, but then to search the Scriptures to see if those things be true. If you don't get into your mind, into your heart, the reason, the evidence for the conclusions of truth that you hear, then it will never be your own. It will never be my own, if I don't imbibe it thoroughly myself.

As much as possible, during these presentations, we want to give you the reasons, the evidence, the sweet reasoning from the spirit, that we think draws a conclusion that we are representing.

Last night, we had the privilege of discussing the Book of Daniel. I see now, the outlines of what we covered last night are being passed out. These are outlines after the fact, So you know what you've covered. These outlines are kind of a summary of what we talked about last night. We're going to spend just a few minutes, going through this, to refresh your memory. Keep them, and take them with you if you like, as kind of a capsule summary of the evidences that the Book of Daniel has given us that it really is inspired, prophetic testimony.

We read about the importance of prophecy from our Lord's own words in Luke, the 24th chapter, when he mildly rebuked his disciples for not being more keenly aware of the testimony of the prophets about himself. Then we reviewed the twelve chapters in the Book of Daniel; six of them are historical, six of them are prophetic in character. Then we looked specially at just one glimpse of the 11th chapter of Daniel that was extremely clear about prophesying things as much as 150 years beyond Daniel's time, which history records the fulfillment So precisely that none can gainsay that those words were fulfilled accurately in history.

Daniel prophesied during the time of the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia, after the Babylonian empire had fallen. Yet, in the 11th chapter, we have a vision given to him that would indicate precisely certain kings that would follow, and that the fourth king, King Xerxes, would gather up all of his accumulated wealth and go against the kingdom of Greece. History records that King Xerxes did just that, and he failed to conquer them. Prophecy says that subsequently a great, mighty king would rule—that would be Alexander the Great from Greece—that, after he was broken, his son would not inherit nor any of his posterity, but the kingdom would be split into four parts. We referred, last night, to the four generals of Alexander that received the kingdom. History records this: Cassander in Macedonia, Lysimachus in Asia Minor, Seleucus in Syria, Ptolemy in Egypt.

We referred briefly to the fact that Daniel, the 8th chapter, by name tells us that Medo- Persia would supplant Babylon and that Grecia, Greece, would supplant Medo- Persia. Again, it repeats the fact that the first king of the Grecian empire, after he died—his kingdom would go to four others rather than just to one heir.

This is so precise that, either we have inspired prophecy (and we claim that's it) or it's a fraud one or the other. Critics claim that these prophecies had to be written after the fact because how else could they be predicted? not willing to assent to divine providence.

Therefore, we turned, as we now turn the page, so we turned last night to the chapter 9 in Daniel, to examine a prophecy that could not be gainsaid if we can recognize its fulfillment. I believe we can. It's a prophecy that unabashedly proposes to date the appearance of the Jewish Messiah to the very year of his death.

It proclaimed that Messiah would bring in everlasting righteousness, that he would die, he would be cut off, it says, but not for himself—quite obviously he was cut off for us and our sins, not for his own because he had none. It dates from the going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the climax of these events would be a period of 70 weeks of years that would transpire.

You remember last night we took quite a bit of attention to demonstrate from other scriptures that this concept of one day representing a year in prophetic fulfillment has a lot of background. You see it in Numbers 14:34 that forty days represented forty years; the Israelites were punished. Ezekiel, the 4th chapter, that 430 days Ezekiel lay on his sides was 430 years in fulfillment of punishment upon the Israelites before the Maccabean revolt gave them independence under God's providence.

We saw that, in Daniel, the 10th chapter, a 21- day delay in the angel's response to Daniel's prayer was a precursor of a 21- year delay in the rebuilding of the Jewish temple for which Daniel was praying.

Then we turned our attention to the 70- weeks' prophecy, and dated it precisely from 458 B.C., the date given for the decree of Artaxerxes that allowed Ezra to return to the land. We found that in Ezra, the 7th chapter, verses 11- 26, an entire decree brought out in great detail dated unambiguously to the seventh year of Artaxerxes. Seventy weeks of years bring us to the climax of the

death of Christ on the cross in 33 A.D. —very powerful evidence for the integrity of scripture.

I think those of you who have cared to spend the time to study these issues came because you were probably in sync with the view that these are Words of Life, these are words that are inspired, these are words that are prophetic testimony from God Himself. While we gave evidence to prove this, it wasn't as though we were disputing.

There are critics that do dispute it. We wanted to lay a good foundation for our faith; and, if that prophecy in Daniel 9 is fulfilled so precisely, and everyone recognizes it was predicted hundreds of years before the advent of Messiah, it's extremely strong evidence for us.

This evening, we're going to turn to the Book of Revelation. Turn with me, if you would, to Revelation, 1st chapter. There, just to repeat a little bit about Richard's introduction, we read the introduction to the Book of Revelation. It tells us essentially what the Book of Revelation is all about.

We read in Chapter One, verse one, that it is the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. —He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John who bare record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things that he saw.

It's nice to have that beginning of this Revelation. Revelation is rather mystical. If somebody just presented you with the Book of Revelation as it's composed in our Bible, without any authentic record or pedigree of where it came from, you'd have no reason to give it much credence. But, with this pedigree, the Apostle John signs off himself on this issue, that he received it directly by an angelic messenger who was representing Jesus himself who received this testimony from His own Heavenly Father. That pedigree is—as we said last night, it's nice to have a claim that is stark, one way or the other. Either this is true, and therefore worthy of our utmost attention to the symbols of this book—or it's not.

The testimony of the early Christian church is unanimous in this issue: John the Apostle, late in his life, was exiled to the Isle of Patmos because of his faith. All of the other apostles had passed into death.

John was alone remaining of the Twelve Apostles. Jesus appeared to him, and gave to him in vision the book that we know as Revelation.

Not only by its opening claim, but by the integrity of the early Christian testimonies about it, we receive the book as viable, legitimate, and accurate. Even more so, when you go through the book, you finally see the harmony between the prophecies and what has actually occurred from that time forward. It seals the testimony as a testimony which only God by inspiration could have organized, arranged and delivered.

It's interesting, when you look at the Book of Revelation, to recognize that, with 22 chapters in the book, you don't quite know where to jump into it. You have to start with some kind of basic structure, some basic outline, to the book. Then, from a basic outline of it, work inward to grapple with some of the technical details.

If I ask, or if somebody asked me, Just turn to the 6th chapter of Revelation, verse 7, 8, 9, 10, any of those, where there is highly symbolic language—Just pick it up and interpret what it means, it would be impossible. Fresh? Just like that? You couldn't. You have no context in which to place it. You have no bearings in which to understand about when it took place, what the subject is. You'd see mystical symbols that would just be very strange. You have to get an over- all context first.

In Revelation, we propose, there is a very easy way to outline the basic context of the book. As people begin to approach Revelation, there are three basic views about the book. There is what is known as the preterist's view. You can judge from the PRE, perhaps, pre or early, that this is a view that says that most if not all of Revelation was accomplished early on, about John's time. As a matter of fact, this says, basically, that all of Revelation has been fulfilled, long ago in the past. And the exponents of this view claim that these symbols relate to the destruction of Judea and Jerusalem that were occasioned about forty years after our Lord left this earth.

That viewpoint doesn't have many adherents today. One of the strong problems with this view, that was popular in years past, is the fact that, if this applies to the destruction of Jerusalem and Judea, which took place about 70 A.D. (that's when the city of Jerusalem was over- run by the Roman army, the walls were breached and the people massacred), how could this be a

prediction of what would happen in 70 A.D., when the book of Revelation was written some time after 70 A.D.?

The Book of Revelation was written in the 90s. We can't pin it down to an exact year; but we know that, when John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos (and he says, in this first chapter, that he was in the Isle of Patmos when he wrote the book), we know from early Christian testimony that John was exiled there late in his life.

Under those emperors that were in the late 90s—Nerva, Dometian, the emperors that ruled Rome, that were beginning to oppose the developing Christian church—under that persecution, John was banished to the Isle of Patmos and wrote the book. Anything in the book that's predictive couldn't apply back to 70 A.D. We just read the passage that says that this book was going to show him things which must shortly come to pass, not things that were already in the past.

I don't claim that there's nothing in the book that was past from that time. There is. We'll see reference to Jesus' death, which was past. But the bulk of the prophecy should apply to the future from John's time, if that testimony of the angel would be legitimate. This view is really not widely held today.

The second view that we have to deal with is the futurist view. If the past view isn't right, you have the option of the future. But the futurist view is really much more narrow than you might suppose. It says that most, if not all, of Revelation is for the last, final climax of this old world, and it really doesn't deal with the intervening 2,000 years. That, also, brings us at least two major problems. One is, as we just read, that the angel said that this revelation would bring to John's attention things that must shortly come to pass. —Shortly come to pass is a whole lot different from 2,000 years of no application and then applying to the last, spectacular finale of the age.

The other problem is also an impediment for thinking that's what he means. It takes all of the symbols of Revelation, and collapses them down to almost a moment in time, or a very brief span. With all the detailed intricacies of this symbolic vision, you collapse it down to one moment, and the symbols almost become meshed together without any hope of segregating them into independent thought. They all apply to one finale. It's almost as though it's just a compendium of imagery brought to our attention, rather than a detailed, symbolic unfolding, a revelation, a revealing, of the things which really will happen. That's really what it's intended to

be. The word revelation is a revealing of things that will come to pass. It's not going to be revealing much to people that don't have faith in it. It's only going to be revealing to those who look carefully at the symbols and note the progress of history as those symbols have marked them out.

This brings us to our third view. It's referred to as the historical view. We believe this is the proper view for the Book of Revelation. Revelation does contain things in it which have not yet been fulfilled. That's clear. It also contains things in it which have been of current interest and concern and value to the saints that have lived all through the Gospel Age. The Book of Revelation takes you from the time of our Lord all the way through to the establishment of the Kingdom on Earth all the way through to the end of the Thousand- year Millennium. It is all- embracing from Jesus' time until the climax of the fruition of God's Plan in the Thousand- year Millennium. It details within it things that have occurred through the age as well as at the end of the age.

It is true that much of the detail in the book is current and impending, but much of it is historical. To get our bearings on it, we have to segregate what is future, what is current, and what is in the past. We have to do this in a way that makes sense. You can't just arbitrarily make rules and then hope that it's all going to work out. I hope to reason with you on this and see if what we suggest appeals to you. It is not fresh with us, you understand. This is the testimony that most Christian, Protestant scholars have developed and lived with for the last three centuries. But in our day, the hold on some of these points has weakened. Not all Christians have kept peace with it.

We're going to look at the historical view. We're going to ask ourselves, first, in the Book of Revelation where do we make the dividing points—between past, present, and future?

We're going to start with the easiest part. It's not the first part. It's the last part. We're going to start with the future, because I think it's clear what part of Revelation has not yet been fully completed.

Let's turn to the end. Let's turn to Chapter 20 of Revelation. Here we read, in verse 1, I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he

should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a Little Season.

We have to ask ourselves, is there evidence in the past 2,000 years that Satan has been bound and incarcerated in the pit? You might say that the Christian Gospel has been a restraining influence on the Adversary. This is true: paganism has fallen, heathenism has fallen to the onslaught of the Gospel. Nevertheless, as Peter says, Our adversary is a roaring lion who stalks about seeking whom he may devour. —

Is it true that the nations of the earth abroad are deceived by the deceptions of the great Adversary today? I think it is. I think it is clear that we have not yet reached the time when the pale of ignorance cast over all nations, spoken of in Isaiah 25, has been peeled back and all the world has said, Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him. —That time has not yet come. We're still in the period of time when faith is required, and the enemies of righteousness are still largely in control.

This text speaks of a time when the Kingdom of Christ in its incipient stages will restrain Satan So thoroughly that Satan is spoken of here as being placed into the bottomless pit, out of which it's very difficult to climb. I hope you all recognize—I think you all do already—that Revelation is not speaking literally. Revelation is speaking symbolically. In fact, at the very beginning, it says that the angel sent and signified it to John. Signified, when you break up the word, is sign- ified.

He put it in signs and symbols for him. When we talk about a great pit that has no bottom, we understand that it's a symbol. There is no such pit literally. If I were put into a pit that was three feet deep, there'd be no problem; I'd just climb right out of it. If the pit was twenty feet deep, it would be substantially more difficult. As soon as I got to the bottom, I might be able to inch up, or cut holes there, or get a standing and climb out. If it had no bottom—I'd keep falling, falling, falling, no bottom—I couldn't reach the bottom for a stand point So I could climb up. The intensity of the symbol is that Satan will be restrained without influence and without authority, for a period of time.

To intensify the symbol, it says there's a seal put upon the pit—not only without a bottom, a support from which to climb back—but a seal set upon it. Not only that. The person who's in control here has that key and he won't unlock that seal until it's due at the end

of the Thousand Years. We'll get back to this chapter a little bit later.

I think it's clear that in Revelation 20 we are talking about a period of time that has not yet climaxed. Chapter 20, Chapter 21, and Chapter 22 deal with the Thousand- year Kingdom of Christ, and we're going to call that the future part of Revelation.

You might suppose, that it makes sense that if part of Revelation is past, that might be the early part of Revelation. That is sensible. I think it is correct. The past part of Revelation starts with Chapter One and goes through Chapter Thirteen. We'll get back and examine that a little bit more. Right now, I'm just making that claim. Right now, we suggest that the Chapters 1- 13 are the past part of Revelation.

I've intentionally drawn these arcs to overlap. I may be a sloppy artist, but not that sloppy. Where the past and the future overlap, we call the present. —Revelation does this kind of thing. It tells you visions of one period of time which lap upon another. It brings up the thread of thought and brings you forward again. We'll suggest that this period of time—where the first chapters, 1- 13, overlap the last chapters, 20- 22—Chapters 14 through 19 are the present. We're going to talk about that period of time quite a bit as well tonight.

We're going to back, now, to Chapters 1- 13, to see how the book starts and to see what groundwork we can lay for understanding the symbols of this book. Chapter One of Revelation: We're going to look at Chapter One and read Chapter One in some detail, to get acquainted with the introductory symbols that the Lord himself interprets for us. We're going to go through Chapters 2 and 3, not in as much detail. Then, we're going to start speeding up a little bit in our course, covering the chapters following that, in a more abbreviated sense, but give you an idea of how they apply.

Chapter 1. We've read the first two verses. —Blessed is he that reads and they that hear the word of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand. The time is at hand for these words to have some application.

When John wrote them, that was true. What comes next is John's greeting to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come, like the everlasting to the everlasting, the Almighty, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, And from Jesus

Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Behold, he comes with clouds; every eye shall see him, they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. That's John's introduction. That's it. That's John's introduction to the book.

Now what we have is an introductory remark from the source of the book itself, the great Alpha and the Omega. Verse 8: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. —John says that he is on the Isle of Patmos, banished there for the testimony of Christ: I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. —John probably means by that that it was Sunday when he had this vision. He was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and he heard behind him the voice—a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto—and then he lists all these churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea.

We have to get in our minds the scene he is here painting for us. We have Israel on the eastern side of the Mediterranean in this area here. There would be Jerusalem, approximately, but this is being written at a time after Jerusalem has already been conquered. Where did John go to live after he left Jerusalem? He went to, what we call today, Asia Minor or Turkey. That's where John was living, up in this area here, what we know as Asia Minor, in the city of Ephesus. John ministered to all the churches round about.

As we mentioned before, John was the only one of the twelve apostles still living at this time. All of the churches of Asia—when it says Asia, it really means Asia Minor—all of the main churches of Asia Minor would have been, kind of, John's pastoralship. They would have been under his review. When the angel said, Write this down and send it to the churches which are in Asia, all those various churches, I think John did just that. He sent it to each one of those churches as a message.

When we go a little further, we'll see these seven churches represented in symbol by a very dynamic picture.

In verse 12, we read: I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; —seven candlesticks.

We have, with the flame burning, apparently, seven of these. — And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; his eyes like a flame of fire;

His feet like unto fine brass, as though burned in a furnace; and his voice as majestic as the sound of many waters.

And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two- edged sword: and he looked like the sun shineth in his strength. —I think, without labeling who this is, you probably already figured it out. This seems to refer to our Lord himself, Jesus. Later in Revelation, in the 19th chapter, you'll see Jesus with the label, the Word of God, with that sword coming out of his mouth, kind of an identifier of who this is.

Why is it described this way? Is this what Jesus looks like in heaven now? Is that the way they saw him leave earth? Did they ever see him on earth look like this? None of the above. Jesus is a glorious spiritual being. What we have here is a symbolic description intended to tell us what our Lord is doing during the present time.

What does this thing describe? What do all these garments describe? We believe that it describes what they would have been familiar with from the Old Testament. It describes a High Priest, decked out in his robes, apparel of authority and dignity, as one serving as High Priest.

What about these seven candlesticks? It says here, that in the midst of the seven candlesticks was this Son of man, this Jesus—as though he's going between and around and among them. What does a priest do to the candlestick? He keeps them burning brightly. He trims the wicks, he sees to their needs, he makes sure that everything is prospering. That's what our Lord has been doing for 2,000 years, with the Gospel Church down through the age.

Revelation does not just start with symbols, all by itself, fresh out of nothing. Revelation draws upon the symbology of the Old

Testament repetitively. In the Old Testament, in Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness, we have the symbols that are referred to here. I think when I say Israel's tabernacle, most of you will remember that when Moses was leading Israel through the wilderness, Moses was told by God to build a structure that would be kind of like a temporary temple. They were on the move, so they couldn't have a solid foundation that would be immovable. It was a temporary dwelling that would represent the place of God and His worship. It was the place where the priests would function.

Let's draw a little diagram of that temple, and see how it would relate to this opening vision of Revelation.

We had, in the Tabernacle, which was three times as long as it was wide, two compartments. We had a square compartment that was known as the Most Holy, and we had a rectangular compartment known as the Holy. Around all of this, we had a linen curtain high enough so that a person on the outside could not look over it. It was five cubits tall, which would be over seven feet. It was too tall to look over.

The only way you could gain access to this was through a linen curtain that was called The Gate. As you enter into the gate, in this court structure, it's as though it represents people who want to begin to approach God. Paul says, seeking after God if they might find Him. —They're seeking after God. They walk through. The first thing they see, upon entering, is an altar. This was a large altar upon which the sacrifices of atonement to God were offered. I think this pictures the fact that, as we approach God from the world, coming into faith-relationship with God through this faith-curtain, the first thing we acknowledge is the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus as the basis for all of our hopes to approach forward unto God. That has to be first, recognizing the sacrifice of our Lord on the altar.

There's more. There's something we need to do. As we approach further, we see a laver. It's a receptacle made of brass that does nothing more than contain water for washing. Once we recognize that Christ has laid down his life for our sins, we have to go forward and begin to clean up our life. We have to wash away the defilements of our wayward course so far as we are able. We can do a lot in that respect. We can begin to avoid sin and put off the old man as much as possible. We can never, no matter how much we try, make atonement for our sins. That comes first. Then we begin to wash up and clean up our act.

Then we see the great privilege that we have, to walk forward and yield our whole life, in service, in devotion, into harmony with the heavenly Father. We begin to think of spiritual values, spiritual goals instead of earthly pursuits. We begin to trim away the old man and to think toward spiritual things. This is represented by coming into the presence of God, into the Holy itself.

As we do this, we find some furniture in this compartment that reminds us of our Christian walk. We see here, on the table, a table of food—two stacks of six loaves apiece, called shewbread. This bread was baked and put on display, representing our spiritual nourishment of God's Word.

We see here, on the other side, a lampstand that has seven branches. Now we're connecting this to Revelation. This lampstand, known as a menorah, has a centerpiece and a stand, and then it has three branches coming off each way.

That makes one, two, three, four, five, six, seven branches. In each of these, you have a flame burning. It was the duty of the high priest, or of the priests generally, as they ministered in here, to make sure these lamps were trimmed and burning brightly and the wicks were cut. They performed these services morning and evening, day after day, continually, so that this lampstand would be burning brightly. That lampstand, and the brightness that it gives, is the only light in this compartment. Where do we get the light, as we walk through our course in the Christian way? It comes from Christ. Christ says, I am the light of this world. —

Christ also used another analogy in John, Chapter 15. He says, I am the vine, and you're part of it. You remember the analogy: I am the vine and you are the branches. —This candlestick, although primarily representing Christ, has seven branches, to remind us of the fact that we, as Christian members, are part of Christ. We're part of the Body of Christ. This lampstand represents the whole church of God and its various divisions.

Is it coincidence that this lampstand has seven branches to it, and what we have seen in Revelation, Chapter 1, is Jesus tending the seven lampstands? No, it is not a coincidence. These things are intended to draw our attention. This in the Old Testament is fulfilled by this in the New Testament.

The picture is slightly adaptive. It's slightly different. We propose that this represents the entire Christ, Head and Body, through the age, holding forth the Word of God, trying to be lights in this

world, and that this lampstand is pictured in Revelation in its seven pieces to represent the whole of the Gospel Church as they travel through this age. Our High Priest Jesus is tending to, is nourishing, is making sure that his church is being developed properly. That's where we're going with the Tabernacle. I'm going to go just a little further, to finish out the picture for you. That's all. Then we're going to get right back to Revelation.

You go a little further, and you find an altar here, made of gold. On that altar, the incense was being offered that arose out before God. We're going to encounter that incense altar later in Revelation, when we get to the 8th chapter. On this altar, not animal sacrifices for atonement, but rather the incense of sweet aroma of faith-fidelity to God was being offered.

Finally, covered, the piece of furniture in the next compartment, the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the presence of God Himself. If this represents the presence of God, that's where the miracle light shown here represents God's presence with Israel, and we are represented here, in the flesh, before our glorification, wouldn't that mean that going from one compartment to the other would represent us going from flesh into the spirit realm? I think it would.

We have a text on that which I think speaks very clearly on this point. This is flesh, this curtain would represent the death of our flesh when we pass through it, and we come up in the spirit realm on the other side. The text we have in mind is in the Book of Hebrews. It's in the 10th chapter. It applies specifically to our Lord Jesus' passing, because he was here for 3- 1/2 years of his ministry in the flesh, 33- 1/2 years altogether. When he died, he had to pass from this life to his spiritual reward beyond. That's what Paul is speaking about in Hebrews, chapter 10.

Heb 10:19 —Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (that would be the Most Holy; it says we want to go there) by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

Paul says this veil, because that curtain between the two compartments was always referred to as the veil, that veil represents the flesh of Jesus which, when it was rent asunder, provides access from the flesh into the spiritual conditions. Where did Paul get the idea that that veil represented the flesh of Jesus

that was torn to allow access into the spirit realm? I think you can piece that together with what you remember of the crucifixion. Do you remember, at the time of the crucifixion, at the very time in fact that Jesus himself personally expired, there was a great earthquake. The earthquake was so violent that it says the tombs were split apart. Some of the bodies projected outward—kind of emblematic of the resurrection to come.

Something else happened at that time, which was very unique. It says that the veil in the temple was rent from top to bottom right through. Maybe it was bottom to top, but it was rent all the way through. That temple veil was something like four inches thick of tapestry, according to Josephus—an amazing display of divine power. The moment Jesus died, that veil was rent, as his flesh was being rent on the cross—suggesting the passage now from the flesh into the spirit. We'll get back to that a little later. We'll get back to the Tabernacle illustrations later. For now, we'll get back to this specially.

We just wanted to mention that these seven burning lamps here are picked up in Revelation. Just as this is Christ, Head and Body, it's like the vine and the branches are represented here, so Revelation says, The Church of Christ will be represented in seven divisions, seven branches down through the age. These are represented by Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Those churches just happen to form a very nice circuit, that John probably would have taken when he was normally ministering to them. They're just in the right sequence. They're not helter-skelter, as though you have to criss-cross. They're in a nice, pleasant circle.

I think it indicates the progress of the Christian church during the Gospel Age, the age from Jesus to the Kingdom. Each church is a different time-phase through the age of the church that would exist, representing Christ in the flesh.

That's a proposition. We propose that the seven stages of the church represent seven time-divisions of the church through the age. What we have to do now is to look and see if there's evidence to support this: Let's finish the first chapter first. Revelation, chapter 1. We left off at verse 17: When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, 'Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of

hell and death. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.

Now he's going to tell us what these things mean. He's going to give us an interpretation of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks. He says, The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

When you read the word angel, you probably think of a spiritual, glorious, angelic messenger. That's the way it usually is in the Bible. In this case, I think you'll find that some of the best expositors on Revelation recognize that literally there was a fulfillment of this down here on earth.

It isn't as though John wrote a message, a letter, on a parchment and gave it to an angel to do something with. These are the angels of the seven churches, and by the word angel here, which literally means messenger, it has been supposed by the historic interpreters of Revelation that what was meant literally was the chief leader of each of these congregations.

They voted for a leader for their congregations. They had elders and servants and deacons, and they had a leader for the congregation. So, if John is going to write a message to the church of Ephesus, to whom will he write it? To the leader of the congregation at Ephesus. These literally are the angels, or the messengers, or the leaders of each of these churches.

I'll just give you an example where this is used literally in Malachi 2:7, where the priest, the high priest who served Israel, is referred to as the messenger or the angel. We're not going to spend a great deal of time on this—it's kind of secondary—but there are several examples where angel, messenger, refers to those who are sent out to God's bidding, and here it's the leader of each of these churches.

Symbolically, if these seven churches of Asia Minor represent the entire church of Christ throughout the age, then these seven messengers in the hand of Jesus, seven angels, would represent those faithful ministers who have given to the church the message Christ had for them at any given time down through the age. These are the human teachers of the church.

That may seem strange: to call a messenger, —an angel, —a human being in the flesh. Let's flip over a little bit, to Chapter 12 of Revelation, where I think this will become clearer. Look at Chapter 12, verse 1. This is one of the most mysterious parts of Revelation, Chapter 12. The first part is not so mysterious.

Chapter 12 says: There appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. —Clothed with the sun, standing upon the moon, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. It's been very common to interpret this as spiritual Israel, the church, the Bride of Christ. She is clothed with the Gospel sun. In the background, the Jewish Age is behind her, the testimony of the Jewish Law, represented by the moon. Notice what she has as a crown on her head—twelve stars that are often considered to be the apostolic lights, which are the source of truth for the Gospel church.

I think that's correct. We're just referring to the fact that here it is fairly clear that these twelve stars are the twelve apostles, each star one of the apostles. The apostles were human instruments, human beings that God chose, that Christ chose to give us the foundation truth of the Gospel. If these twelve stars are unique individuals, we suggest that the seven stars in the right hand of the angel are also the earthly representatives God has used down through the age to steer the church in one direction or the other. We find the Reformers here, we find people like Peter Waldo, people like Martin Luther, people who have, from time to time through the age, directed the church in the right way.

This whole thing is telling us that throughout all the experiences of the age, God is going to make provision for the proper elucidation of the church. Through all of the trials and tribulations, He will give them shining lights to direct them in the right way. He will send good teachers to assist them.

Let's go back now, to Chapter 2 of Revelation. We finished Chapter One. We're ready to go on to Chapter 2. We'll look at Chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, and see how the details of these narratives take us from the early church, right through the age, to the church that is existing today.

We're going to skip a little bit now. We're going to try to increase the pace of our progress, or we'll never make it very far.

After that, we're going to skip even more rapidly, to just show you the reasons that we know where to apply the time of the various prophecies, without going into the detail of them.

We want to cover every part of Revelation at least a little bit tonight, so that you have an over-all concept of it. It's important that we go through Chapters 2 and 3 to show you how the prophecy does go from the early church to the last church, to our day, to the end of the age, sequentially through its narrative.

Revelation 2, starting with verse 1: Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus write; These things saith he that hath the seven stars in his hand, that walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks; I know your works, your labor, your patience, you can't bear them which are evil: thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, for my name's sake hast labored and not fainted.

This is a rather interesting commendation. It's all good. He's going to come up to the negative in just a moment. He says, You've tested those which are good teachers. In fact, you examined those that claimed they were apostles, and found them not. You've distinguished between true and false apostles. —Now, may I say today, that, while we can imbibe the spirit of this, the actual words of that fit much better for the early church. Today, if somebody said, You know, I'm an apostle, I don't know that I'd give him much credence. I'd say, You know, I think the names of twelve apostles are listed in the Bible, and I doubt if your name is Bartholomew. We have them down. We know who they are. They were historic figures.

But there were people in the early church that did claim to be special representatives of Christ, and they weren't all. There was one, the Apostle Paul, who claimed to be a special representative of Christ, and he was. He wasn't one who had seen Jesus personally except, of course, in his resurrection glory. Paul was a good apostle, and they were good at recognizing the good teachers. But there were some false teachers, and they recognized that they were false.

We suggest that this is one of the keys that the commendation to Ephesus fits specially to the early church. The spirit of it applies to us. We have to discern good and false teachings so that we are not led astray. But it fits especially to them.

Verse 4: Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love. Remember your first works, and repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of its place. But this I give you, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, and I hate them also. —This was a commendation for the fact that they were not willing to abide the concept that grew later in the church—this distinction between clergy and laity. The Nicolaitans were those that had the doctrine of lordship over the church. As history unfolded, you remember, that doctrine was fulfilled in a very unholy way. There were those who claimed to be lords, bishops, popes, people that would lead and direct the church, and they abused their position. He says, to the early church, You didn't let that happen. You maintained the concept of the oneness of the Body of Christ. —Not that aren't leaders, but there are no lords in the church. Our Lord is Jesus, and we are all brethren.

With that concept in the first church, I am going to immediately flip over to the seventh church, and then we'll back- fill the in between. Let's go to the last church, and see how this last church specially seems to link in to our day, the end of the age, the time of the transition of the ages.

This is Chapter 3 of Revelation, verse 14: Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, the seventh church listed, write; 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot, but because you're lukewarm—neither cold nor hot—I'm going to spew thee out of my mouth. '

This is kind of like today. It's somewhat different than the church has ever been. We are So little persecuted as the Body of Christ. We're uncomfortable sometimes, but we're not much persecuted. Things can grow stale. It can grow lukewarm. Obviously, if we could all be hot, zealous, on fire for the Lord, that would be the preferred thing.

It's mystified me a little bit that Jesus said, I wish you were either hot or cold. —It's easy to become cold. If that's what you want, I'll do that. But that's not the point. The point is that if you're lukewarm you make others deceived into thinking that that's really the way Christ is all about. That's what discipleship is all about, just kind of lukewarmness. If you were cold, you'd be no deception to anybody. If you were hot, you'd be a good example. Lukewarm, what can I do with you?

Did you ever go to the refrigerator and take a nice, refreshing glass of cold water? Or, if you want a cup of coffee, and you want it hot? What about a nice, warm day, and you reach in for a cup of refreshing water and it's just lukewarm? It's just not satisfying. That's the symbol he gives here. —I'll spit you out of my mouth. —He's just going to let you go.

In verse 17: Because you say, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; you don't know that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked, this is my advice: I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire of difficulty, of trial, that you may be rich; white raiment (the justification of Christ), that you may be clothed, and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you can see your true condition and the wondrous things that are available now to those that are studying earnestly the Words of Life.

In verse 19, he says: If I love you, I'm going to rebuke and chasten you.

In verse 20, he says something that I think ties it right into our end of the age: Behold, I stand at the door, and I knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

As you know, each one of these messages to the churches closes with a hope, a reward, a prospect, a promise for our glory beyond. —He that overcometh will I give to sit with me in my throne. —I will give to eat of the hidden manna. —I will give him a white stone with his name on it. —This blessing or that.

Here, this is not that blessing. This is not the blessing of the ultimate overcomer. That follows. That's in verse 21. —Him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, beyond the veil.

Verse 20 says something that is our present inheritance if we will receive it. —I stand at the door and knock: and if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, nourishment—a spiritual dinner, as it were—and he with me.

Where is that symbology coming from? That's coming from something in the Gospel of Luke that is uniquely identifying the end of the age and the time of the return of our Lord.

Let's look at Luke the 12th chapter and see exactly where Jesus' reference is when he says these words. He's referring to the words he used earlier himself in Luke.

Lu 12:35: Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he comes shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and will serve them.

Sound familiar? That's just what he says to the seventh church. The question to us is, are we watching? We're at the end of the age. Are we still earnestly watching the signs of the times? If we are, we will have the blessing of the special nourishment of meat in due season of truth, of understanding the scriptures in a way that good, devoted Christians in past ages were not privileged to do. They didn't have the same benefits.

Last night we mentioned that, in analyzing the prophecies, we have the privilege today by virtue of having facts, books, evidence, archeology, the testimony of the ages, all wrapped up, and delivered to us. We can read it on our computers if we want.

About a year ago, I acquired for my computer a little CDROM that has all of the early Christian writings for the first four or five centuries. All I have to do is to search for anything I want, and I have free access to it.

We have the means at our disposal, to wipe away the vestiges of the Dark Ages and see things more clearly in our Christian way than any others have had the privilege. All have had the benefit of Christ's protective care over them. All of the saints, no matter what their experiences were, during the Dark Ages or whenever, have had the nourishment they needed.

But now, remember, he said, You should anoint your eyes with eyesalve. Be watching and earnestly listening to the voice of prophecy, and you will have a special understanding. —He ties that in with the time period at the end of the age, watching earnestly for the Lord's return.

What we're trying to propose here is that the first church was commended for testing the apostles. The last church is exhorted to be watching earnestly and attentively to the signs of the end of the

age. I think that's good superficial evidence that the one church is at the beginning, the last church is at the end of the age.

Now, can we fill in the experiences of the Gospel church through the age? If you look at the second church, Smyrna, I think we'll see some things that do tie in very well with the church after the apostles' day.

Chapter 2 of Revelation, verse 8: Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know your works, your tribulation and poverty (but you're really rich). I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Those that say they are Jews, and are not. —I think that most of you probably have some link to a Christian church. Have you ever had Gentiles come into the church and—say, I am a Jew, and So persecuted? No. That's odd. What is this language talking about? It's talking about those that are not REALLY Christian coming into the Christian church and saying, I am a spiritual Israelite. I'm a member of the Israel of God. —They're not, really. They're really wolves in sheep's clothing. They're really tares.

Do you remember what our Lord said in Matthew, the 13th chapter? There would be a sowing of the seed of the gospel, and it would bring up a crop of wheat. Then it says, While men slept, the enemy sowed tares in the field, and a crop of tares came up. —The servants of the Lord asked, Should we go out and pull up all these tares? They're drawing nourishment from the true wheat. —Remember, the answer was, No, don't do it. If you try a general separation of the good and the bad, it's going to cause such disharmony, such confusion, such rancor, that it's going to injure some of the true wheat.

You'll pull up the true wheat with the bad. Just wait. Let them grow through the age, and at the end of the age there's going to be a sifting. There's going to be a separation. There's going to be a harvest.

What we're looking at here, is the beginning of the age, after men slept, after the apostles had fallen asleep in death. When the earthly church was gone, tares began to come into the church.

Let's see how that happened. Let's look at a few more verses. Verse 10: Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. The devil shall cast some of you into prison. —This was the time when

the Christians were being thrown into prison, martyred for their faith, thrown to the lions. Then he says, You may be tried. You shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Tribulation for ten days. —We know from our study of prophecy that, when you see a prophecy talking about ten days, it is probably more aptly fulfilled in ten years. That is the way the prophecies of Daniel are.

Look back in Christian history, and you will find the worst period of persecution upon the Lord's people which was ever recorded under pagan Rome was the ten- year period from 303- 313, under which the Emperor Diocletian had a particularly severe purging of the Christians. There were other purges, there were other martyrs, there were other problems; but this is recorded in ecclesiastical history as the severest phase of the trouble. —I think that, prophetically, it was looking forward to these ten years of special difficulty that these ten days of trial were intended.

Shortly after that, things radically reversed. Shortly after that, a man named Constantine, whose mother was a Christian, came to the throne of the empire, defeated his enemies, and he supposed (because of his mother's influence, and a vision he thought he had—probably something he saw in the sky) that it was Christ that gave him his victory.

We'll find out from Christ how much he intervened and how much he didn't on this point. The point is, Constantine radically changed the whole empire. From the time of—well, it was just a couple of years after this—but by 325 at least, all of a sudden things were totally turned around. He convened a Council at Nicea in 325, and he was basically bringing the whole empire into Christianity and wanted everybody to be unified together under this new religion.

Well, that's a nice thought. There's only one problem: Constantine himself wasn't particularly Christian. He was a Christian in name only. He wasn't baptized when he held the council. He wasn't particularly concerned about dogma. He just wanted to have peace.

Immediately, he urged the pagans to transform themselves into Christians. That's where he had a flood of tares flooding into the church, and that's where you had the beginning of the really bad period in the Christian history.

It is true, it broke the specter of martyrdom. That was good. That was a blessed relief. But it had the other problem of bringing massive tares into the church. That's what we just read about those that say they are spiritual Jews. They really are the synagogue of Satan. This does picture the second church very well.

Briefly, going on to the third church at Pergamos, verse 12: To the angel of the church in Pergamos write; 'These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 'I know your works, where Satan's seat is: even wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was (spiritually) slain among you.

Antipas. —Antipas was the faithful martyr of Jesus in this third church. Antipas is like anti pas. Pas is the root of the word papa. —Anti- papa. Is it good to be against your folks, against your father? No. But this was the time in ecclesiastical history when one person said, I am the 'papa' of you all. I am your spiritual father. —Remember what Jesus said? —Call no man father, for all of you are brethren. One is your Father, and one is your Master, even Christ. All you are brethren.

But there came a time in Christian history when one man said, I am the papa. I am the pope. This is the period of time of the rise of the ecclesiastical church. Those who objected to this, this superiority and this rise of the clergy, were figuratively not very favored, because this became the dominant persuasion.

Verse 14: There are those there that have the doctrine of Balaam, who taught for hire, taught people to eat forbidden things, and you have the doctrine of the Nicolaitans—about lordship it's running rampant in your church. —That's when lords and bishops and popes were in their heyday. —Repent, or I will come to you quickly, and will fight with the sword of my mouth.

We go into the church number four, Thyatira: These things saith the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, his feet like fine brass; 'I have a few things against thee because you suffer that woman Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her space to repent; and she didn't repent, So I'll do away with her.

That has taken us to the fourth church, the time when great Jezebel, the evil queen of Israel, way back in the Old Testament, figuratively teaches and seduces the people of Christ to do bad things in the name of Christ. We suggest this is the epitome of the Dark Ages, when the Gospel of Christ was nearly extinguished.

The Gospel of salvation by the payment of money, the old indulgences, became very, very rampant.

The next church, in Chapter 3: Unto the church of Sardis write; ‘These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and you’re almost dead. Be watchful. Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I haven’t found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief. ‘

The message to this church is, Repent. Change. Reform. Do something different. —There we have the church of the Reformation. One of the highlights of the church of the Reformation, one of the stalwart reformers, was Martin Luther himself.

You remember what Martin Luther’s chief dogma was, that caused him to reject the contemporary wisdom of his day. It was the doctrine of justification by faith. —When we think of Luther, we think of justification by faith. —Luther read Romans, and said, The just shall live by faith, not by the payment of money for your sins, but by faith in the blood of Christ.

That’s represented by the white robe of righteousness. You notice the reward to the overcomers of this church? It says, He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.

I haven’t talked about all the promised blessings to these churches. In every case, the promise given to that church ties in with the circumstances they had during that period. Church Number Two, when they were being martyred in the arenas, was told, Be thou faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life. —Church Number Three, when they were being cast out by their brethren in the rising church, was told, If you’re faithful, I’ll give you a white stone with your name on it that no man knows but you. —You’ll have an endorsement from me directly. All these messages, all these blessings, tie in directly to the circumstances of that church.

We go to verse 7: To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; ‘These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door. ‘—I suspect this probably refers to the fact that the church- state powers of Europe were So oppressive, So difficult, that God said, I’m going

to send you an open door. Come to a new world, a new land, where Christianity and the Protestant movement can flourish and grow and can be glorified. —

I think that was the New World, and I think that was where Christianity shifted to, in its prime focus. Most of the prophetic movements since then have been based in the New World.

There's more we could say here, but finally we get to the seventh church.

This is the end of the age, the church of our day, the church which is the final stage of the church of Christ on this earth.

That's rapid. That's quick. That's all the history of the Gospel Age really quick—the seven stages of the church. We could take a couple of hours to go through all the particulars, and show how the particulars support this concept—each stage representing a different time- phase of the church down through the age.

What we want to do now is to go to the next couple of visions. We want to show you what evidence there is that the next series of visions do the same thing as Chapter 2 and 3. The next series of visions take us through the Gospel Age from beginning to end, consecutively, down through the age.

We're in this period of history, the past, Chapters 1- 13. We've already gone through the introduction to the book, Chapter 1. Next, we have a series of sevens: there are the seven churches, the seven seals, and the seven trumpets. That takes you all the way to Chapter 11. We're almost done with this first third of Revelation.

The seven churches, we've gone through. We think that takes you from the beginning to the end of the Gospel Age in seven stages.

You probably could guess what I'm going to say about the seals. I think that they also take you from the beginning of the Gospel Age in a series of seven visions.

Let's check that out. Let's see if there's evidence that, after we finish the vision to the churches, we jump back again to the beginning of the Gospel Age. Otherwise, you might just assume that it's consecutive and it keeps on going. Let's see if there's evidence that we jump back in time after the vision of the churches is complete.

We ended up at the end of Revelation, Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, we read an altogether new vision: After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: You remember that everything else has been here on earth. When John was in the spirit here on the Lord's Day, he heard a voice behind him. He looked back and he saw the vision of the seven churches.

Now he hears a voice up there. He looks up there, and he sees a door opened in heaven. There is a voice that says, 'Come up hither, and I will show thee things that must be hereafter.' And immediately I was in the spirit, taken up through that door. I saw a throne set in heaven, and I saw one that sat on the throne, and he was to look upon like jasper. —People think that might be a diamond, or a sardine stone.

There was a rainbow about the throne, and a site like unto an emerald. What a stately presence he's been absorbed into.

If you read the rest of the Book of Revelation, with this backdrop in mind, I think that you will find that Chapters 1, 2, and 3 are down here, and Chapters 4 and the rest of the book have their scene up in heaven before this throne. Even when you get to Chapter 20, you'll see the throne again; Chapter 21, the throne again. This is the scene for the rest of Revelation.

What you see at this throne of God, Chapter 5, verse 1, you see In the right hand of God sitting on the throne, a book written within and on the back side sealed with seven seals. And a great voice says, 'Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals?' And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, and look thereon.

I just wept, because no man was worthy to open and read the book and look at it. One of the elders said, 'Don't weep: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, hath prevailed to open the book, and loose the seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of this throne scene, and of the four beasts and the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and he began to open the seals, one by one.

I almost don't need to say who the Lamb is. Who is the Lamb of God? That was Jesus. That was our Lord. He was the one who was worthy when nobody else was, to take the scroll out of the hand of God and begin to loose the seals, to read the things of the mystery of God's plan.

I'll put in a footnote for you here: If you want to get deeply into the seals, read Zechariah, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, and then read the Revelation seals. That will give you more about it. That's all we can say about the seals tonight—except that I want to show you—in fact, I think we've shown, that it starts at the beginning of the Gospel Age. Jesus has just proved worthy, has taken the scroll, and now begins to open the seals.

A scroll is not like a book. A scroll is a rolled- up piece of paper. If you have a seal on the scroll here, and have another one here, and another one here, another one here seven of those you don't see what's inside until you open all seven seals. When he opens one seal, he sees a vision, but he's not reading what's on there yet. When he opens another seal, he sees another vision. It's not until you get to the seventh seal that, finally, you see the majestic material that's inside.

We can't detail the contents of the scroll, just for time's sake here. But, as we go to the seventh seal—as we go to the last part of the seals, that takes us to Chapter 7 of Revelation. Let's see what happens as these seals unfold.

Chapter 7 says: After these things I saw the four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow, and he says, verse 3, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. Then, you find another reference in verse 9: After this, a great multitude, which no man could number, standing before the throne, and he says, Who are these? In verse 14, he says, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth in the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; For the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them. — We're in heaven. That's a heavenly throne. They do service to God day and night in His spiritual temple.

The only point we're making here is that the first seal starts with the beginning of the age when Jesus has proved worthy as the Lamb of God. The last seal takes us to the time when the church is in glory, and all things of this age are finished. We've gone from the beginning to the end of the age through the seven seals.

Now we turn to Chapter 8. We get into the seven trumpets. Verse 2: I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar (at the golden altar), having much incense to offer.

Note the Tabernacle. There's the Most Holy. There's the Holy. There's the Golden Altar. At that golden altar, this says, I saw an angel offering incense at the golden altar which would arise before God.

Verse 4 says: The smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. —Do you notice what it says? The incense went with the prayers of the saints. Who offered the incense here? The high priest. The priest would offer the incense, specially on the Day of Atonement, and he had to offer that incense before he could go in and apply the blood of atonement before God.

Doesn't that tell you that this offering of incense takes us back to the beginning of the age, before Jesus proceeded to apply his blood to redeem us. Then, when he offered the incense, the prayers of the saints could be accepted before God, and we could be heard.

Do you remember what was said about Cornelius? —Your prayers have ascended as a memorial, as it were, but it wasn't timely. Until finally it was time in God's plan to open the call to the Gentiles, and then he could be heard.

In the same sense, the prayers of the church, the saints, the bride of Christ, could not be heard, could not ascend as members of the Body of Christ, until Jesus' life had been given. There had to be those three and a half years of faithfully giving his life as an incense offering to God, before he could go in and apply his blood before the Lord. From that time forward, our prayers can be accepted as part of the Body of Christ. This takes you back to the beginning of the age. That's our only point here.

Let's go to the Last Trumpet, the very last one, and see where we are when the Seventh Trumpet sounds.

Flip over to Chapter 11 of Revelation. It says, verse 15: The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom' Now, in my King James it says kingdoms plural. In some of your Bibles, it will say kingdom singular, and that's the way the Greek reads. —The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ; and he shall reign

for ever and ever. —There's the introduction of the Kingdom. We have to be, then, way at the end of the age, when the Kingdom of Christ is established.

You remember, earlier we said, Chapters 1- 13 blended in to Chapters 20- 22. —There's where it blends. The seventh trumpet sounds, and it inaugurates the Kingdom of Christ.

Chapter 20. Here the Kingdom of Christ is detailed more explicitly. The end of one age and the beginning of the next overlap in a transitional phase, during which the kingdoms of this world begin to be uprooted in preparation for the Kingdom of Christ.

Are we there today? Are we in a time of history when we're in a period of transition between the old and the new? We are. We have seen the nations of the earth begin to tremble under the weight of their responsibilities, their inability to cure men's problems. It's in fits and starts. You have a depression, then it seems to get better. You have a world war, and it seems to get better. There are troubles abroad, and them seem to get better. What did Paul say? —Like birth pangs—severity increasing, then relieving. Finally, the new birth of the new order is going to come.

What do you see, on the other hand, that shows the Kingdom of Christ beginning preparation? We're almost ahead of ourselves here, but have you noticed a new, little nation on earth that wasn't there too many years ago? They just had their Jubilee Year this year. The nation of Israel. According to the prophecies, the Israelites have been gathered back to their land. The testimony of the prophets is that, through the nucleus of Israel, God will begin to work to reestablish His authority on earth, after the church is finally complete.

The Israelites are not a nation that express faith in the Messiah today.

Zechariah, the 12th chapter, tells us there will be great difficulties upon Israel that will turn their faith back to the Messiah. But we're not there yet. We're not yet finished with this age of reaping in the church class who will be kings and priests in the next age. We're still in a period of transition. We're just trying to show that these trumpets start at the beginning of the age, when the church's prayers begin to be offered, and go through to the end of the age, at the time of transition from the old world into the Kingdom of Christ.

These sevens—the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets—they all talk about something during the Gospel Age in seven time- divisions.

Some time ago, I asked the question, Could you just jump into Revelation in any old spot and begin interpreting? Now I'm going to go back to the same point. I'm going to jump into Revelation, the 6th chapter. That's the passage I mentioned earlier. I'm going to jump in there and see if we can make sense out of it, knowing what we now know about the sequence of Revelation.

Revelation 6, verse 9: When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: The fifth seal probably jibes with the fifth church. Get the details of this symbolism. —I saw under the altar the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus. —May I say that's a very strange place for souls to live? Under an altar? To really envision this, there's an altar, and they're sitting there down below. What's the point?

You remember the altar in the Tabernacle, that we first encountered. That represented the sacrifice of our Lord. Remember in Romans, Paul says, Present yourselves, your bodies, a living sacrifice. —Romans, chapter 6, If you have been baptized into Christ, you're baptized into his death. —We have to go on that altar with him. We have to die with him in sacrificial death, in company with our elder Brother Jesus, who preceded us. He's the Redeemer. We're not. We have the privilege of sharing his sacrifice—of sharing the experiences and tribulations he did, So that we can share the glories of his reward beyond the veil with him.

That's the scene here, in Revelation 6:9. During the Dark Ages, there had been a lot of sacrifice going on—a lot of martyrdom—and a lot of saints had burned themselves out on the altar, and the ashes fell through the grating, and the ashes compounded beneath the altar. That's the scene. You're taken to the darkest period of the church's history, when a lot of martyrs were crying out, How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you rectify this situation? —It's like the voice of Abel's blood crying from the ground for vengeance. The answer, the response is, Just rest a little season. Wait until your fellow- brethren are killed as you were.

Then, the time of rectifying the balances of justice will come. The evil will be put down, the righteous will be exonerated. The First Resurrection will give you glory and honor. —Just by understanding where we are, this Fifth Seal is more than halfway down through the age, about the time the Dark Ages were breaking into the light of the Reformation, and this cry of How long before judgment comes? had to be in abeyance for a few more years, until the end of the age. This is just an example of how the structure of Revelation can help us interpret the specifics, once you have the broad outline.

We're going to have to give a quicker review about things coming after.

After the sevens—churches, seals, and trumpets—we have, Chapter 12, this woman to whom we referred earlier. It's the church, which found during the Gospel Age that she had to flee for her life.

In Chapter 12 of Revelation, we read in verse 6: The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days. —We'll talk about that tomorrow night. We'll get right into that prophecy directly.

Verse 13: When the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman. To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, times, and a half from the face of the serpent. —All we're going to say tonight—we'll talk about it more tomorrow—is that the woman is the persecuted church during the Gospel Age.

Now you look at Chapter 13 of Revelation, and we see in Chapter 13 something that's not too holy: I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. —That's why I say it's not something good here. Something bad is coming up. —The names of blasphemy mark this as something pretty poor.

And the beast which I saw was like a leopard. —The first thing we notice about this beast is the seven heads and ten horns. It's a pretty ghastly critter already. The next thing we notice is the description of the beast. It says the beast was like a leopard, and it

had the feet of a bear, and he had a mouth like a lion, and it's just altogether a very dreadful beast.

With that beast in mind, we'll tell you what we think it is, and then we'll give you the support. This beast represents the great system that has ruled the Christian world incorrectly for centuries.

What we have in Chapter 12 is the true church being persecuted. What we have in Chapter 13 is the false church rising and growing during the age, assuming authority that was never intended.

With that precursor, let's go back to the Book of Daniel, where we were last night, and see that these very same symbols are here in the Book of Daniel. We're going to go to Daniel, Chapter 7. Daniel 7 is the first of the visions that Daniel himself has in his prophetic career. Daniel had interpreted the visions of others. This is the first vision that he personally has.

Daniel 7 sees four beasts coming up out of the sea. Verse 3: Four great beasts came out of the sea, diverse one from another. The first was a lion and had eagles' wings. —Verse 5: Another beast like unto it like a bear. —Verse 6: After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had on the back of it four wings like a fowl.

There's a strange thing about this leopard. It's like no leopard I ever saw. —The beast had four heads; and dominion was given to it. —Four heads! Now we go down to the next beast, in verse 7. There's no real animal to which you can compare it. He just saw a fourth beast, dreadful, terrible, strong exceedingly; it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue: it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; it had ten horns. —Incredible!

What we have now, in Daniel, a leopard that has four heads, a bear that has one, a lion that has one, and this fourth beast that has one head. We have seven heads, and we have ten horns. That's what we have in Revelation: seven heads and ten horns.

What Revelation is telling us is that what's it's seeing is the amalgamation of all the things that Daniel has seen in his prophecy. What did these things in Daniel's prophecy represent? Let's list the beasts that Daniel has seen. Daniel has seen a lion, a bear, a leopard with four heads, and a terrible beast.

There's no real question that these represent four governments. In verse 17, we have it interpreted for us. Daniel 7:17: These great beasts, which are four, are four kings (which are kings over governments) that will arise out of the earth, But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever and ever. —That's the brief explanation of the entire chapter. Daniel isn't satisfied. He asks some more questions, and gets some more information. But that's it, briefly.

Who do you think these four animals are? Who were these four kings? Who do we think these animals represented directly? Last night, we talked about the first empire that Daniel was dealing with; it was Babylon. That's unambiguously clear.

You can see in Chapter 2, about verse 34—verses 33 and 34—where Babylon is, by name, the first kingdom with which Daniel is dealing. Last night, we dealt with Chapter 8, which said the second kingdom would be Persia. In Chapter 8, it said the next kingdom that would arise would be Greece. The fourth beast is not named. No name is given to it. But it has to be pretty obvious—Babylon, Persia, Greece—what came after Greece? Rome. That's almost by acclamation the identification of the fourth beast.

What John the Apostle has seen in Revelation is based upon the prophecy of Daniel. There have been these four empires that have come to hold sway and ravage upon the earth. John is seeing the next development that comes after this. He's seeing this terrible beast that's like the residue of all of these. It's kind of like a lion, a bear, a leopard. It has iron claws. It's the amalgamation of all of these things that came to hold sway upon the earth.

If we want to turn briefly, just real quick, to Chapter 17 of Revelation, we'll get a very direct clue as to who it is—this great government, this great beast—that, during the Gospel Age, has ravished the Christian earth. Revelation 17:18 —The woman which thou sawest is the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth. —Let's go back, then, to verse 9, where this great city is pictured as seven heads, seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

This great city of Chapter 17, we can't get into too much detail on that, is the city that has seven hills. What is the seven-hilled city that has ruled the world? Rome, that's it. You'll even find some coins from ancient Roman times that—I don't know why they would do this, but they seem to take glory in this identification—they show a woman seated on the seven hills of Rome.

The Roman empire that used to be pagan, you know what happened to it. It didn't go out of business. It just switched hands. It switched hands, and became the Roman Catholic Church.

I've given a lot of talks to people who were heavily Catholic, and I've identified through prophecy the Catholic church. I have to make it clear that I am not against Catholic people. We're talking about history, prophecy, things that actually occurred. Whether you like the Catholic church or whether you don't, either way, you can identify historical fact that, after the collapse of the Roman Empire, the old pagan Roman Empire, who took over and ruled with a high hand through the age? For better, or for worse, it was the pope at Rome.

In 538 A.D., for the first time the pope was left as the governor of the City of Rome. —A year later, his enemies were vanquished. By fits and starts, for centuries that followed, the papacy at Rome, the Catholic church, became the dominant influence. - 31-

It crowned and uncrowned the kings of Europe and held sway for more than 1200 years. Finally, a man named Napoleon came along and said, I really don't respect your authority. The authority I respect is these guys with guns in back of me. —You remember the scene where Napoleon invited the pope to the coronation ceremony for Napoleon, and the pope expected to take the crown and place it on Napoleon's head (because he had the authority) and Napoleon took the crown before it could be handed to the pope and put it on his own head, and said, By my own authority, I crown myself. —The pope was out of commission.

From the time of the French Revolution forward, he has not held sway over Europe. For centuries, he did. If you look at the history of the Gospel Age, there were many saints in that system. I could name names: Erasmus, at the time of the Reformation; others, before the Reformation, that had to be part of it because there was little else. There were many saints that were obscured in that system. As a system, it was a ghastly system, and it had the blood of saints and martyrs on its hands. We'll get into that some other time.

That's historically what happened. In Chapter 13, you see the residue of all the old pagan governments accumulated into the new government of the Gospel Age, the Roman Church, that governed with a high hand and ruled all the kings of Europe for more than 1200 years.

We have finished Chapter 13. We have finished the history of the Gospel Age. We alluded originally to the Thousand- Year Kingdom of Christ, in Chapters 20- 22. We'll talk about that more later, in the days to come, So I don't mind skipping over it now. What about this period, Chapter 14- 19?

We can do little else than just refer to it and explain what it is, without detailing all the specifics. If you go to Chapter 14, I think it's about verse 14, you see the key emblem which tells us this period of time, what it's all about. Chapter 14, verse 14: I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. —

Who do you think that Son of man is? Our Lord. He has an instrument in his hand, and it's not the sword coming out of his mouth. It's sharp, all right, but not for destroying people. It's the sickle to harvest people. This is the Harvest of the Gospel Age.

Do you remember, way back in John, the 4th chapter, Jesus was passing through the city of Samaria in the land of the Samaritans? He wasn't particularly trying to attract a crowd, but he spoke to a woman at the well, and told her a few things about her which she was surprised anybody could know. She recognized him as a prophet. Immediately, she began telling everybody, This man is a prophet.

He told me things he wouldn't have known, otherwise.

A great crowd assembled. Jesus looked up and told his disciples, It is commonly said that there are four months to go before the harvest. I tell you, just look. The fields are ripe for harvest.

These Samaritans were not of Jewish blood, but they were of Jewish faith. They were kind of semi- Jews. But he saw their eager interest in the things of God, acclaiming him as a prophet who could tell them something good. He said, This is the time of harvest. —Then he went on to explain that other men have labored to sow the seed that has produced this crop. He said, You (my apostles, my disciples) are entering into their labors by doing the reaping work. Jesus was reaping. All the years he was on earth, he was reaping that crop of people grown under the Jewish Law to bring them into the Christian garner. The reaping didn't end when he left. That reaping went right on until Judea was destroyed in 70 A.D., until Jerusalem was laid waste.

All that time, the Apostle Paul was going around the Roman Empire, gathering others in as he could. That was the Harvest at the end of the Jewish Age. It wasn't a harvest of a moment. It was a harvest that took forty years. You could even say it went to Barkokvah in 135, in another sense. It was the culmination of the age.

What we're taken to, in Revelation 14- 19, is the culmination (not of that Jewish Age, but) of this Gospel Age. It's not the work of a moment. It's the work of a period of time. It's the transition of the ages, to gather in all of the ripe wheat that the Christian doctrine has been growing through the age, bring them into the heavenly garner, clear out the rubble of the field, and prepare for the sowing of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

This has been So brief. We wish we could say more about it. We do at least want to give you this mention of Matthew 13. We told you we'd get back to Matthew 13 before the evening was over.

Matthew 13 was the place where Jesus gave that parable of the wheat and the tares that were to grow together through the age. After telling how things would be through the age, then he says what would happen at the end of the age.

Matthew 13, verse 30: Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather first the tares to bind them, to burn them later, but gather the wheat into my barn. —Then, in verse 38: The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the Kingdom. The tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. —This is a bad translation—kind of good, kind of the right thought, pretty bad, though, in its particulars. Most of your better translations will say something like, The harvest is the consummation of the age. —The word there is not world at all, but age.

The harvest is not the moment of climax, but the consummation. The Greek word here for end is *suntelio*. —The usual word for end is just *telos*, but *suntelos* is defined by those who know Greek, and I just read their comments, to be not a moment, but a consummation work. That's what Jesus is saying. Just as the end of the Jewish Age was years, in which he was reaping in the fruitage of that age, bringing them into the Christian garner, So the end of the Gospel Age implies a whole transitional work, taking the Christians who have grown into the spiritual garner, plowing in the

field ready for the new crop in the Kingdom of Christ. We're in that period today.

That's the present. That's where the past and the future overlap. Chapters 14- 19 discuss the final work among the church, the seventh stage of the church. Chapter 14 is an introduction to the harvest. All the symbols in Chapter 14 are discussed at greater length in Chapters 15- 19. Chapters 15 and 16 are the seven plagues, which end the old world and bring us into the Kingdom. Chapter 17 is the judgment of the ungodly woman, the apostate, false church. Chapter 18 and 19 give a great detailed description of the fall of Great Babylon, the apostate Christian world, after he's taken the church out.

You see the parallel? Introduction, sevens, woman, Babylon. The same way things have developed through the age—he's going to judge during this transitional phase of the harvest.

Finally, we get to the third phase, the Kingdom of Christ. We have the First Resurrection. We have the second resurrection, of all the world of mankind. We have a picture of the church in glory, as the New Jerusalem, as a bride adorned for her husband. Finally, the closing verses of Chapter 22 close out the vision with hope for our Lord's soon return.

That's the Book of Revelation in a nutshell. We've had to omit So many details, So many things of great interest. We will touch upon some of them in our later evenings of our seminar. But that's Revelation. It's not So hard. Once you have the three- part breakdown of the book, you realize that each of those three has four divisions. You have twelve components that close out the holy writ of inspired testimony, twelve pieces of prophecy. It reminds you of the way the Old Testament closes. Twelve minor prophets close the testimony of the Divine Inspiration in the Old Testament. Twelve components in Revelation, twelve separate categories, close the Divine Inspiration in the New Testament.

Dear friends, we're thankful for your attention. We appreciate your earnest desire to know. We hope that what we have said has been absorbed, tested. If it appeals to you, embrace it. Prove all things. Hold fast to that which is good.

DAY 3—THE TIME OF THE END

RICHARD KINDIG, Chairman: Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar. This is day three. The subject, The Time of the End.

Lots of doomsday preachers have quoted the quote, the time of the end, as though it says, the end of time. —It's not. —The time of the end was a phrase that was given to the Prophet Daniel in the Book of Daniel by God. It refers not to the end of time but to a whole period of history. Tonight, we're going to learn about that history. To do so, David Rice of San Diego, California is going to explain Daniel, the 2nd Chapter, Daniel the 7th chapter, and Revelation, Chapters 11 and 12.

We're going to learn about the 1260 days and the 42 months and the 3- 1/2 years. It's a very exciting study. I hope you enjoy this third session of The Bible Prophecy Seminar.

DAVID RICE: Thank you, and, friends, we're glad to see you back again tonight. As you will remember, yesterday we covered the Book of Revelation. As some have observed, when you try to cover the Book of Revelation in one night, you're bound to not be totally fulfilled.

We have a sheet for you tonight which capsulizes what we discussed yesterday, but it adds some details. With the handout that you have, we're going to review a little bit tonight.

It was necessary for us, last night, to get an overview of Revelation. There are things in Revelation that correspond to the prophecies of Daniel that we have to correlate tonight. If we didn't have some overview of Revelation, we'd be jumping into a book that is often misunderstood; it is very hard to understand. Now that we have some bearings in the book, I think we'll be able to get the right time- settings for the prophecies in sequence very well.

Last night, we suggested that Revelation can be rather easily divided into three categories: that which is past, that which is present, and that which is future. The past and the future slightly overlap, and that makes the present. The first 13 chapters of Revelation cover the Christian era, from the time Jesus died and gave his life and started the church until the time when Christ returns and completes the church and begins the incipient stages of his Kingdom.

Chapters 14- 19—Chapter 14 talks about the Harvest of the Age. In fact, Chapter 14, verse 14, says, I saw the Son of Man (Jesus) seated on a cloud, having a crown on his head (he's returned with kingly authority) and he has a sickle in his hand, ready to reap. —

Just as the end of the age for the Jews, the Jewish era, was finished with a Harvest work that lasted some period of years—from our Lord's first advent all the way through, certainly to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., if not beyond. So, at the end of our age, the Christian era, there is a long period of transition between the ages, during which the saints in Christianity are being called to a greater clarity of understanding, a greater devotion, and the harvest of them to be gathered into the spiritual garner—takes place during our end of the age.

At the same time that is going on, there is also a judgment that God is executing upon all those systems that have grown up through the age, which He did not authorize. We talked a little bit about some of the false churches that have risen during the age, which have had great political influence for hundreds of years. We're going to look at that in depth tonight. Those systems, during this harvest, are to be judged down.

That's why, in Chapters 14- 19, we have the account of the Seven Last Plagues, which, in seven sequential episodes finally bring the institutions of this world low.

We have, in Chapters 18 and 19, a detailed account of how the judgment is executed upon these various systems, finally introducing Chapter 20, the beginning of the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

We're going to deal primarily with the first of those three parts of Revelation tonight. When we review what we did last night, we're going to review mostly the first part of Revelation. The essential theme for tonight is the prophecy about The Time of the End—the prophecy in the Book of Daniel about The Time of the End. It's a very specific prophecy.

From the first night, you know that I always like to have a prophecy that is so specific that it gives us years involved, durations—so specific that we can attach precise dates to it. We're going to do that tonight, with this prophecy about the Time of the End. It is a time- prophecy of the Old Testament. It is coded in language that is not straight- forward—until you see that Revelation gives you the secrets to break the code and understand the time period and the dates involved.

What we're going to tell you tonight about the Time of the End prophecy is nothing that's brand new. It's not something that was discovered recently. However, it is something that, although

discovered more than hundred years ago, has (in many Christian circles) lain dormant because Revelation is So hard to understand. But, once we get the layout of it basically intact, I think these things will just open up to us.

In Revelation, you remember that in the first third of the book, in that which we called past, or the Christian era, we have a series.

The Introduction to the book is listed first. Seven candlesticks, we learned, were seven churches—the one church of Christ throughout the Christian era divided into seven time- divisions. We see Jesus tending those candlesticks, dressed as our great High Priest, making sure that the sacrifice and ministry of the church is faithfully done and cared for and nurtured all the way through the age, and that the seven stars in his right hand are Seven Messengers various teachers established in the church through the age to point them in the right direction.

We're going to see one of those stars very particularly tonight, coming out in a period of the Fifth Trumpet in Revelation that we'll notice. We have given you a precise breakdown on our handout of the seven. You remember there are seven churches, there are seven seals, and there are seven trumpets.

One of the confusing points to many prophetic students is assuming that Revelation is totally consecutive. If you try to take the seven churches, and then follow that with the seven seals, and presume that the seven trumpets are consecutive after that, you run into a problem of interpretation that's almost impossible.

That's why we emphasized, last night, that the seven churches go from the beginning of the church all the way through to the time of the Second Advent of Christ, and (sequentially) all the way through, each church has a different phase.

But then, you remember, that Revelation Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 (which begins the seals) start fresh again at the beginning of the age when it indicated that there was none worthy to open the scroll or loose the seals until the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, our Lord, proved faithful, and was able to unloose the seals.

That shows we're starting over again with the Gospel Age. When we get to the 8th chapter, the series of the Seven Trumpets, you remember that there it opened with an angel standing at the golden altar, offering the incense (representing the sweet perfume of Christ's sacrifice) So that the prayers of the saints of the church of

Christ could then be accepted. We must be way back at the beginning of the age again.

But the Seventh Trumpet introduces the announcement, The Kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. —It takes us through to the end of the age again.

It's important to recognize that the churches, seals, and trumpets are three views of the same period, the Gospel Age. There are seven in each case, and each applies to the same period of time.

We've been so bold as to suggest for you, on the outline, particular dates that mark the divisions between these seven periods.

I won't insist that these dates are exactly precise. Most Christian students, however, who follow this line of approach, the historical view of Revelation, have approximately these same dates some minor variations here and there.

Let's go through these, and I'll explain why I put these particular dates as we have assigned them.

The first one is the Church of Ephesus, the church which started with the apostles. (You couldn't start the church until Pentecost and the blood of Christ applied for the church.) Jesus died in the year 33, So we'll put 33 as the beginning of Church Number One. That's rather unambiguously clear. Remember the first night, we took great pains to establish unequivocally the dating for Jesus' ministry. Born in 2 B.C., baptized in the fall of 29, crucified on the cross in the spring of 33 A.D. That's fairly clear. That's a good date.

33- 100 A.D. is an ambiguous date, a round number. We're not precise there, but it's—about the time that the apostles passed from the scene. As a matter of fact, almost all, if not all, of the apostles except John had passed from the scene before Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. But John lingered somewhat later.

There's an interesting hint of this in the last chapter of the Gospel of John where Jesus is telling Peter something about what's going to happen to Peter in the last days. He's going to be taken where he'd prefer not to go, and he tells him a little bit about Peter's crucifixion at the end of his life. Peter asked, What about that man? referring to John, and Jesus said, If I will that he (John) tarry until I come, what is that to you? Just do your job. —And all the brethren began to think, Whoa! I think John will continue to live until the

Lord returns. —The Gospel writer didn't say that. He just said, What if? —But it was a clue that maybe John would outlive some of the others. It turned out that way. He was the last living apostle of all of them. John outlived the others by 20- 30 years. John was still a prisoner in Patmos, in the 90s, when he had the vision of Revelation. When precisely he died, we don't know, but we write down roughly about the year 100, as the completion of the early stage when the apostles were still with the church.

Shortly after that, one of the Apostle John's dearest and closest companions—his name was Polycarp—was of great repute in the area where John had ministered in Asia Minor—we know it today as Turkey. Polycarp suffered martyrdom in the arena, a kind of prime example of what was going on in the Church of Smyrna, being martyred unto death. The promise to that church was, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. — What a fitting promise to that church, undergoing martyrdom!

That second church, Smyrna—Smyrna, by the way, means bitter—had bitter experiences.

Those were bitter experiences, when the Christians were being thrown to the lions literally, in the early period of the church. Let's label that 100- 313 A.D.

Why do we cut it off at 313? 313 was the date when Constantine, together with another companion Licinius met together and issued the Edict of Milan. It's called that because they met together in the city of Milan in Italy. They issued the edict that henceforward there shall not be persecution of Christians. State persecution of Christians would terminate. We believe that is a good marking point for the end of the church of Smyrna, this bitter period that was persecuted by the pagan Romans.

Pergamos starts then, about 313. With Constantine's influence, people horded into the church half- pagan, half- Christian—and that was a relief for the brethren. It was a relief for the Christians that they weren't persecuted quite so vigorously. But it began the decline of Christianity very, very quickly.

This is the time when the false church and the clergy and the doctrines of the Nicolaitans (that we read) about began to take hold in the church. Bishops, popes, cardinals began to rule over the Lord's flock. The truth began to get diminished and, subsequently, the church of Rome became established as the power to be reckoned with during the Christian era.

That leads us to Period Number Four, Thyatira, 799- 1517 A.D. Why do we start Thyatira and end Pergamos at 799? Well, that date is not as clear as we might have it, but I have chosen that date 799 because it is the date when, for the first time, the pope, who happened to be Leo III, under some attack, fled to Charlemagne for refuge. That started a whole chain of events that changed the course of history.

The following year, Charlemagne, to whom Pope Leo had fled for protection—Charlemagne accepted the crown of the empire at the hands of the pope. For the first time in history, the pope is exercising the authority to crown and uncrown the heads of Europe. He has really become entrenched in power now. Thyatira was that time when the papal church had established themselves as the rulers and masters of Europe. From that time until the Reformation, that was a good de- marking point from 799.

We'll see, later tonight, that power of the pope wasn't really fully squashed for a thousand years hence, until the year 1799. We'll get into those details later. This constitutes the Thousand Year Papal Millennium. As a matter of fact, the Catholic church recognizes it as that. What they don't recognize is that it is an imitation of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ which is to be established in righteousness. It was a kind of Imitation Kingdom. That's why we have 799.

We close out Thyatira at 1517 A.D., and many of you will identify that as the date which many historians think was the significant date of the Reformation.

That was the date when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses of objections to the abuses of the church on the Wittenburg door. Those 95 theses were to be the basis of a debate which was subsequently held. One of the most critical things about those theses—one of the most emphatic objections Luther had—was that there was a rampant practice of people paying money for their sins. This was altogether wrong.

There was a very practical reason for that: They were trying to build a big cathedral in Rome, and you can't do that without money. Where do you get money? There's one way: You're in the business of forgiving sins. So you sell indulgences, and people can pay to have their sins forgiven.

There's a little story, I think is quite cute, about this: It's one of those stories you can't be sure is true, but I like it So much I'll share it with you. It's about Tetzel, who was selling indulgences. They had a list of prices for various sins. Among them was robbery and thievery. Somebody asked him, If I buy this indulgence, is it possible to receive forgiveness for sins yet to be committed, or only past sins? —Tetzel said, Well, I guess you can buy if for future sins, too. —So he purchased the indulgence for thievery, and that night he robbed Tetzel. What a good example of what that would lead to, and the best use of an indulgence I ever heard of!

Martin Luther, when he saw this practice, had just come to his own personal conviction that there was no salvation except by the blood of Christ. Now, to see this bandied about for money, deceiving the people who thought they were purchasing forgiveness but had none, if they didn't believe in the faith of Christ, Luther thought, This has to be objected to.

At the time, Martin Luther did not think that the pope was going to be a particular problem here. He supposed that these things were being done without the authority, or perhaps without the full knowledge, of the pope. Luther was a bit naive here, perhaps, but he was a monk in the Roman Catholic church. He was a priest. He was a member of this organization.

As time passed, it became clear that the pope was quite aggravated with Martin Luther, excommunicated him, the Reformation developed, and the rest is history. That was a startling breaking point of history. We therefore suggest that Thyatira, the domination of papacy, stopped about 1517.

The next period is Sardis, the fifth period. You will remember from last night, the command to that church is, Repent. —We would suggest that is the indicator that this is the church to reform. That's the church that should begin the Reformation. We have listed that church Sardis from 1517- 1667 A.D.

Why do we pick that 1667 to terminate it? Turn with me to Revelation, the 9th chapter.

We're going to look at a passage in Revelation 9 that deals with this period of time. I'm going to go into the 9th chapter a little more than some other chapters because I want to lay the groundwork for where we are in Revelation. Then I'll get to that time- period later in the 9th chapter before we leave it.

The 9th chapter starts with the sounding of the Fifth Angel. All these angels are sounding their trumpets. This is the sounding of the Fifth Trumpet. Immediately, now that you know something about the organization of Revelation, you know the fifth church, the fifth seal, the fifth trumpet, would all be about the same time. You know that five out of seven is more than halfway through the age. If we're right, that the fifth stage is the Reformation, the fifth trumpet will be the time of the Reformation, as well.

Let's see if the trumpet that blows in Chapter Nine describes something about what happened in the Reformation. Chapter 9, verse 1: The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

You remember, in Chapter 1, the groundwork we laid last night, the seven stars in the right hand of our Lord represented those who were sent as messengers to help guide the church. You remember the crown of twelve stars on the head of the church, in Chapter 12? Each of those twelve is one of the apostolic stars, twelve individual members of the church that were foundation stones, in this case.

This star fallen from heaven to earth, we propose is, after the same kind of symbology, a leader in the church that is appointed by God to direct the church in a certain way. What does it mean that this star was in heaven but was cast out, thrown out of heaven? Into the earth, as it were.

You will remember that Martin Luther was a priest, a monk, in the Catholic church. This was to the chagrin of his parents; he was supposed to be a lawyer or something like that. Because of his own personal struggles with faith, he promised the Lord that if He would take care of him, he would join the church and become a monk and take a vow of celibacy, and he did. He was very earnest.

As time went by, Martin Luther saw things he conscientiously had to object to, he was thrown out of the church. Somebody said once that it's a horrible experience to be excommunicated by a bull. Of course, a bull is a papal decree. He was no longer welcome. As a matter of fact, it meant he would lose his salvation; it was pretty desperate.

Luther was excommunicated. He was quite happy to burn that papal bull, that declaration. That's the technical name for it, a bull. That's the papal declaration of excommunication. He burned it publicly.

He was cast out of the ecclesiastical heaven, and So he came to the Christian earth. That's the symbology here.

To him was given the key of the bottomless pit. You remember, we talked about Revelation 20 the other night. The bottomless pit is that pit from which you can't escape unless someone lets you out from the top. That's the same pit into which Satan is thrown during the Thousand- Year Millennium. That bottomless pit does not mean death. Satan doesn't die in there. A thousand years later, he's let out of it. The bottomless pit means dormancy, inactivity, powerlessness.

This angel, we propose it is Martin Luther, who is cast out of heaven by excommunication, was given the ability to open up that pit and let the things in it, out. What was in it that wanted to come out? Something that caused a lot of difficulty.

It says in verse 2: He opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace. The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke.

When Martin Luther stepped forward, he did create all kinds of confusion. He was referred to as a bull in a china shop. —That was the way they referred to him—someone who was running rampant and causing havoc. Of course, it was a good kind of havoc. It was the kind of havoc you needed because you had to break apart the strangle- hold of the oppressive church selling indulgences, and point people to the only real way for salvation—the blood of Christ, and faith in that blood.

There was great confusion, great difficulty. As the decades unraveled, there were even wars, political wars, over this very issue. Luther was not a warrior. He wasn't a general. He was a theologian, and he was a man of God. There were wars, however, incidental to this.

Verse 3: There came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. —These locusts are the subject of this trumpet. It was the locusts that came out. These were locusts like you have never seen in your life. These are strange locusts. These locusts are described in verse 7 as having the shape like unto horses prepared to battle; and on their heads were, as it were, crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. —These are strange locusts: They look like horses

In Revelation—this will be the first time we are introducing this, but some of you may be acquainted with the fact that—frequently Christian expositors think of horses as picturing doctrines.

Remember those four seals that were listed in our handout? They started with four different horse colors? The doctrines of Christ started pure, and then they grew red, war- like, as they began to corrupt? And then black, which is tied scripturally to a period of famine—where there was a famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord? Then pale, worst of all. In the Greek, it's chloros, kind of a pale- green color, death—death rampant, spiritual death everywhere. That shows how the corrupted doctrines of Christ became worse and worse and worse through the age. Those horses are doctrines.

These locusts are small critters, nibbling at you, that look like horses. They're really the doctrines of Truth that had lain dormant for so long, during the Dark Ages, and now were opened up by Martin Luther as the leader of the Protestant Reformation. I won't say Martin Luther is the only one active here, but I think he's the star here. That's an interpretation. If you want to speak of it more broadly, there were several reformers who all contributed to this. It was a work too big for one man. But frequently the Scriptures pinpoint someone who is specially active and specially prominent, and that's why I think Martin Luther fits here. If you choose another reformer, that's fine. But that's the kind of symbology we're given here.

Notice, in verse 4: These locusts were commanded that they should not hurt the grass of the earth or any green thing, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. If you have the seal of God in your forehead, these locusts didn't hurt you one bit. As a matter of fact, they were quite a benefit. These were the refreshing doctrines of Truth—Justification by Faith, belief in Christ—that were finally loosed from that period of oblivion and came out, a refreshing benefit to all of those who were really God's people. To those who weren't, what havoc it wreaked! It hurt those that didn't have the true spirit of God.

We're going to see this matter of hurting those that have not the seal of God, again, when we get more advanced tonight, in the 11th chapter. Remember these locusts that hurt those that were upon the earth.

In verse 5, it says they didn't kill them, but they tormented people five months, and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion. It

wasn't deadly, but quite tormenting, quite painful. If you've ever been bitten by a scorpion, you can identify the symbology here.

Did you notice, in that text we just read, we're getting a very specific point. I always appreciate it when Revelation gives us very specific time- points. It says that this pain endured for five months. A month is about 30 days. $5 \times 30 = 150$ days. You all know, from the first night of our studies, that in prophecy a day represents a year in its duration. Remember the 40 days the spies were sent out? Forty years of suffering resulted. You remember the 430 days that Ezekiel lay on his side; it explicitly said that these were to refer to the period of Israel's punishment which lasted for 430 years until the period of the Maccabees.

Remember that 21- day delay for the answer to Daniel's prayer? It represented 21 years until the temple of God was rebuilt. And you remember the 490 days, the 70 weeks of years, applied a day for a year, to lead us to the First Advent of Christ.

When Revelation tosses in a period of five months, you have to pay attention to that. That's a time- period.

This five months, this 150 days, I think is going to represent for us 150 years. If this period starts in 1517, and we add 150 years to that period, that takes us to the date of 1667. What in the world happened in 1667? That's why, on our sheet, I terminated this period at 1667. That's the scripture for it, Revelation 9:5—the five months of torment that this would last. We think that ended in 1667 with the next movement, which was predicted in Revelation. Remember the church of Philadelphia? He says, I have set before you an open door. —We suggested last night that was a new opportunity of the New World where Christianity would flourish and blossom once again.

1667 was the time when one whom you know—from American history—his name was William Penn—was in England, a British man. He began to be very active in publishing against some of the corrupted doctrines of his day. He wrote a tract in that year, called *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*. —That was it.

For that, he was put into prison. He was in prison the next year, 1668. This was a very big embarrassment, because William Penn had a father whose name was William Penn. The William Penn who is famous to us is William Penn, Jr. But his father was no mean man, not a man of inconsequence. He was the admiral of the British navy, a force to be reckoned with.

The king was indebted to his admiral, William Penn, Sr. Now the king has his admiral's son in jail for religious persecution. This was rather uncomfortable. The deal they struck was, We'll let him out, if he'll please leave. —To induce him to leave, they gave him a tract of land in the New World. It was called, not for his sake but for his father's sake, Penn's Woods. —We know it better as Pennsylvania.

He came to the New World. Of all the governors in the New World, William Penn was unique, in that he never made war with the native inhabitants of the land. Never. He was convinced that the way of Christ was peaceful. He had a Quaker background. He was a governor in the New World, and he was a prolific Christian writer. He wrote another piece, while he was still in jail, called No Cross, No Crown. —So clear was he that you had to suffer with Christ first if you would wish to reign with him in His Kingdom.

William Penn was a remarkable man. In Revelation, the sixth church is called Philadelphia. Philadelphia means the city of brotherly love. —In this sixth church, if you read the message to the sixth church, to which we referred last night, there is nothing bad said to that church. Plenty of other churches have bad references made to them. Our church, Laodicea, is told we're blind, we're naked, we need eye salve. To that church, nothing bad was said. It received commendation. It was the time when brotherly love really was supreme in the church.

It's interesting to note that William Penn created the city called Philadelphia. I can't help but notice this coincidence: he was the one who founded this city in Pennsylvania—the city of Philadelphia in the Philadelphia stage of the church. I wouldn't be surprised if William Penn got the name right from the Bible; he probably did. But it's an interesting tie-in. That was the beginning of the people to come over, escaping religious persecution, to blossom and grow in the New World.

Now we get to Laodicea. We have used the date of 1874 for Laodicea. This is a date from out of the blue for many of us, but later, maybe not tonight, probably not tonight, but later on tomorrow—tomorrow, we'll get more advanced in the prophecies of the Time of the End. We'll see where this date might surface. That's all we'll say about it right now.

In the 12th chapter of Revelation, we have a picture of the true church—the woman that has to flee for her life from persecution.

We'll talk about the 12th chapter a little bit later today, because the 12th chapter includes also a Time Prophecy which is the essential prophecy that we want to examine tonight—the prophecy about The Time of the End.

When you get to Chapter 13, it talks all about the false churches which were to come to reign during the age. We'll talk about that tonight. That also contains a Time Prophecy, the same one as in Chapter 12, worded differently. And we're going to compare Chapter 11 of Revelation, the Sixth Trumpet, because that also contains the same time prophecy.

We'll see this again. We'll get back to Revelation 11, 12 and 13 a little later.

Now, with that reminder of our overview of Revelation, we're going to go back to the prophecies of Daniel. We have already looked at this one briefly before—the 7th chapter of Daniel, which is our first mention of this unique time prophecy leading us to the Time of the End.

Of all the time prophecies in the Bible, this is the one that is repeated most often. We'll see it seven times before our evening is over. We'll see this one time prophecy—I like time prophecies—they're precise; we'll see this one prophecy seven times in Daniel and Revelation combined.

It is the very foundation for our understanding of where we are in the stream of time through the Christian era, leading us to the Time of the End that we're in today.

Let's turn to Daniel, the 7th chapter. We'll be referring to that quite a bit. Daniel had received interpretations of visions—in Chapter 2, for instance; but this is the first of Daniel's personal visions.

Daniel, Chapter 2, and Daniel, Chapter 7, have a lot in common with each other. God does this when he gives prophecies, especially in Daniel and Revelation. He gives them one way, with one set of symbols; and then he repeats them, with another set of symbols. That's what you have in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. By comparing scripture with scripture, we get a fuller view of the whole thing.

If some exciting episode occurred—if a meteor crashed down to earth, or something—and somebody rushed over and said, Did you

see that? —I'd say, No, what happened? —He'd say, I saw a flaming ball strike—I'd ask, Where? —He'd say, I'm not sure. — Then I'd find another witness, and he'd say, It was right over there, about a mile over there. —I'd get three or four witnesses, from different perspectives, and I'd begin to piece together the whole episode, and I'd get a clearer picture.

That's what God's doing in prophecy for us. He's giving us various perspectives on the issues He's discussing—all about the same subject—so we can get a clearer view of what's going on.

Let's just note some of the interesting correspondencies between these two pictures. They're altogether different because the one picture is of animals and the other picture is of a statue, in Daniel, Chapter 2.

We're going to refer to this. Because of time, we're not going to carefully read each verse in Daniel 2. I think many of you will remember that in Daniel, Chapter 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a vision—it was a dream, really. He said, The thing is gone from me, but he knew it was very, very important. He called all the wise men of Babylon together, and he said, This is your job. Tell me what the dream was about. —They said, O, king, no problem. Just tell us the dream, and we'll tell you what it's all about.

If some of you told me of a strange dream that you had, and I was on the spot, and it was my Job to interpret it, I'd come up with something, I guess. These folks thought they could come up with something. But Nebuchadnezzar threw a curve at them and said, Oh, no, you don't get the idea. I don't remember the dream. You have to tell me the dream. If you can tell me the dream. I'll trust your interpretation.

That's not too bad.

That was pretty wise. I often wonder, Did he really forget it, or did he just say that? —I don't know. It says he forgot it, So I presume he did. Nebuchadnezzar was a man of action, I guess you could say. He said, O.K., if you're frauds, just forget it. Kill them all. Be done with them all.

By that time, Daniel and his friends had already come to Babylon, and had been instructed to become part of the wise men of Babylon. Among the others they were finding for execution, they were looking for Daniel and his friends.

Daniel asked, What's going on? What's happening? —When he heard the story, he said, Please, just give us a little time. I'll pray to the God of heaven, and we'll give you the understanding. —Daniel and his three friends did pray.

Daniel came forward before the king, and said, O king, not because of my wisdom, not because of me, but because there is a God in heaven Who reveals these things, I'm going to tell you the dream, and I'm going to tell you the meaning. —

Now this stage is set for a very important meaning to this dream. This has been the foundation testimony for the Prophecy of Daniel leading into the future all the way to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ.

The dream was that there was a great image established. The image was made of metal—of various metals. The head was made of gold (I put a crown on my picture because it's all about kingly authority); the chest and the arms were made of silver; the belly and the thighs were made of brass; and the legs and the feet were made of iron. I'm not an artist, you can see, but I purposely accentuated those feet, because as we are going to see the toes are going to be significant in the vision.

By the end of the chapter, Daniel interpreted—as a matter of fact, let's turn there—this is So clear—Daniel, Chapter 2. In Daniel, chapter 2, verse 36, after Daniel has told the dream, he says, This is the dream. Now we will tell you the interpretation. Thou, O king, are the king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength and glory, and wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thy hand and made thee ruler over them all. You are this head of gold. —

So that's Nebuchadnezzar, or, more specifically, the kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. That's Babylon. That's pretty clear. I don't know of anybody who recognizes this as divine prophecy who doesn't see that as Babylon. That's universal, it's So clear.

Then he says, in the next verse, After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Daniel is very clear that, after Babylon, the next empire was represented by the silver. Silver isn't as valuable as gold. That's why he says it'll be an inferior kingdom. In many ways, these kingdoms (as they progressed) were stronger but they weren't culturally superior. They were culturally weaker in many ways. We'll see that when we get to Chapter 7, too.

This was the Medo- Persian Empire. Remember, in our first evening, Daniel, Chapter 8, verses 20- 22, gave us the name the Medes and the Persians, the Medo- Persian Empire.

The third was named in Daniel 8:21,22 as Greece. That's unambiguously clear. We have those interpretations.

This is the one that was not named. We mentioned it last night. History tells us. What was the next great empire that came? It was the Roman Empire. That is pretty universally thought to be Rome and the Roman Empire.

We're going to come back to Chapter 2 again. But let's quickly go over to Daniel, chapter 7, and see the same vision from a different perspective, little different symbols. Daniel, Chapter 7. Here's the vision Daniel had: In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.

Daniel spake and said, 'I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of heaven (probably representing the winds of war) strove upon the great sea (the great sea representing the sea of the masses of humanity). —That's what happened: the wars pushed like winds upon the sea of humanity, and produced these world-empires that came to life and ravaged the world.

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

In the culture of this day, Babylonia/Assyria—kind of one culture, but Babylon had replaced Assyria as the world empire—they, in their culture, used this kind of symbology.

As a matter of fact, in the mid- 1800's, when the archeologists located the city of Nineveh and began to do excavations in the Middle East, they found huge lions with wings on them. This was a

very appropriate way to symbolize the Babylonian empire. It ties right in culturally. I've actually seen some of those figures—not in Iraq, from whence they came—but in the British Museum in England. They have them on display—massive creatures; they had to cut them in pieces and transport them over to England to mount them in the museum. That's a very apt symbology for Babylon.

You notice it says the wings were plucked. —They became more stable. —A man's heart was given to it. —We think of a heart as the seat of affections in a person. It is for us, but that's not the symbology that was attached back in ancient times. The heart was the seat of what we would call the brain. It was thought, it was intelligence, it was acumen. It referred to the fact that the Babylonian Empire really did excel in many forms of wisdom. Many of the numeric structures that we have today, I understand, developed from the old Babylonian sexagesimal system—base 60. We have today, the compass of 60 x 6 or 360 degrees into which we divide a circle, and 360 days (we're going to see) into which the prophetic year was divided.

There was a high degree of civilization and culture which was, to some extent, received by the other succeeding empires, but to some degree it was degraded. That's why the first was superior.

Verse 5: I beheld another beast, a second, like to a bear, it raised up itself on one side, it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, 'Arise, devour much flesh.' That bear has to be the Medo- Persian Empire because it's the next one that fits that's clear enough. All these beasts do represent governments—Daniel says so explicitly. All these details have some meaning.

Three ribs in the mouth of the bear when it raised up—almost as though to say, this bear, the Medo- Persian Empire, would devour much flesh—and it did. The Babylonians—like those wings—moved quickly. We get down to Alexander's empire. It took a small force and moved quick. It struck like lightning. The Medo- Persian Empire was different. They just amalgamated a mass of men and moved and crushed. That was the way they conquered. They were different from the others. It was devouring much flesh.

These three ribs probably represent three particular domains that they conquered as they were aspiring to their empire. That would be Egypt, Lydia (today we call it Turkey, but it was a powerful kingdom at the time) and, of course, Babylon, which they had to conquer before they usurped the other authority. Those are the

three ribs—Egypt, Lydia, and Babylon. This is not just my view. It's a very common view among Protestant expositors, and I think probably the correct view.

Verse 6: After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard which had on the back of it four wings; and the beast had four heads; and dominion was given to him. —The leopard would be Greece. We've already seen two other prophecies in Daniel which speak of the Grecian empire, after Alexander, as split into four pieces—the four generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The four parts of the empire were divided among them. That's why we have four heads to this strange leopard.

Finally, the next beast: I saw in the night visions, behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong, exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue. —Those iron teeth remind us of the iron legs that is the correspondency in Daniel, Chapter 2. That's the Roman Empire. It has ten horns, just like this has ten toes. These ten toes are significant, just as those ten horns are significant—two visions of the same thing.

Now, let's see what happened after the Roman Empire collapsed. This is bringing us into fresh territory that's important for tonight. After Rome collapsed, what did happen? We often think of the fall of the Roman Empire as in 476 B.C. when the Vandals conquered Rome. To this day, the word vandal has the connotation it does because the Vandals were a tribe that came in and sacked Rome and plundered it. Ever after, we call people who desecrate things vandals. That's where we got the word for it.

That was 476, and Rome was taken over by barbarians. I don't mean this as disrespect. History acknowledges these people as barbarians. There was some culture in these barbarians, but they are known by the name of barbarian. —There were some barbarian tribes from the north, Germanic tribes which came down from the north. The name Heruli is attached sometimes to those who took over Rome subsequent to this fall of Rome.

We had the fall of Rome, we had the Heruli, and after that we had another tribe come down who were called the Ostrogoths—the eastern Goths. Those are the ones who were in charge of Rome when the pope was struggling for power in Rome. That was about the year 530, 533, 540 A.D.

Let's see what this vision says is going to happen: We're in Daniel, Chapter 7. Verse 8: I considered the horns (these ten horns, which are a kind of—ten fragmentations of the Roman Empire). I considered these horns, and there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Great things can be great blasphemies, and later on we'll see in Revelation that's what these things were. They weren't good things.

Three powers were uprooted to make way for this stout new horn. This horn, as many of these things are, was quite unique. This horn that grew up, very stout, had eyes and a big mouth. That was what it was known for, its huge mouth; it spoke all kinds of great, swelling words. That's the horn that rose. Before that, three horns were plucked up by the roots.

I think those three horns were: the Western part of the Roman Empire, the Heruli—those tribes which took over Rome afterwards, and the Ostrogoths. History records that sequence before, finally, the pope at Rome got control of the city of Rome as its own possession. We'll talk about that a little more. We want to explain how that happened.

But let's go a little farther in this passage, and note the details. Verse 9 says: I beheld till thrones were cast down—that is, placed—thrones of judgment—and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as a burning fire...

Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

So we're taken to the total destruction of this Roman beast. All of this occurred in Rome. It was the Roman Empire at first. When that fell, this horn took over and ruled for a long time. We'll see how long in just a moment.

Finally, the Ancient of Days, the one from everlasting to everlasting, takes the throne of judgment, and this system is condemned and destroyed. You'll find that in Revelation 19. The great beast of Revelation is thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed.

When the next verse (Daniel 7:12) says, As concerning the rest of the beasts, when they had their dominion taken away: their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. —After all, when Babylon had its empire taken away, Babylon was prolonged. It wasn't destroyed immediately. It was just taken over.

Persia—we know that better as Iran today—continued to exist. A few years ago, the Shah of Iran (before their revolution) celebrated their 2500th anniversary. It was a big, gala affair. It was such an extravagant waste, it led to a revolution, among other things. That was Persia. Their lives were prolonged for a time, even though their dominion was taken away.

Greece is a country to this day. Its life was prolonged, even though its dominion was taken away.

But when, finally, the Roman, and then, subsequently, the Roman papal system is destroyed, that's it. Its life won't be prolonged. When its dominion is taken away, it'll be downed in judgment. It'll be abolished. It's still kicking today. It's not as powerful, but it's still kicking.

We'll go down a little further. —I saw in the night visions (verse 13), one like the Son of man (there's Jesus) came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

That's the end of the vision. That's it. Verse 14 ends the vision that Daniel had. Everything else after this is explanatory in discussion about the vision.

You notice the way this vision ends? The vision ends with the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in place of all of these false systems that have grown up. Do you remember how Daniel 2

ended? Let's turn back to Daniel 2 and see that it ends the same way.

Daniel, Chapter 2, verse 34: Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and of clay...

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; and the wind carried them away, and no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. —That great mountain that filled the whole earth is a representation of the Kingdom of Christ.

Verse 44 tells us So much: In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: the kingdom will not be left to other people (like all these kingdoms were left to other successors; this Kingdom of God will not), and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people and shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

That's what we're looking forward to. That's what we saw in Revelation 20—the Millennial Kingdom of Christ established upon this earth which no successor will ever replace.

In Daniel, Chapter 7, we gather some more details about this Kingdom, and about the circumstances which transpire before this Kingdom comes. It is these details which involve the time-prophecy which is So important to us tonight.

Da 7:15 —I Daniel was grieved in my spirit ... I came near to one of them that stood by, and asked him, 'What does all this mean?' Here's the interpretation: Two verses. The whole interpretation is two verses long. It says:

These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. —That's it. That's the whole interpretation of what we read. It says these four beasts are four kingdoms, and afterwards the saints (plural) of the most High will take the Kingdom for ever and ever. —Saints plural.

What did we see earlier in Daniel? The same vision. We saw the vision of one like the Son of man coming to the Ancient of Days to receive a kingdom. What we didn't know before was that there are

more than Jesus involved in this. The Son of Man is there; it's his authority. But here it says, the saints of the Most High. —That's talking about Christians—those who are suffering and dying now So that they can reign with Christ in the future.

Remember one time, the Corinthian brethren (I believe it was) needed a little rebuking, and the Apostle Paul was there to rebuke them. He was kind of ironic about it. He said, You're reigning as kings without us. I wish you did reign, So we'd be reigning with you. —That's the hope and goal of the church—to suffer with Christ now, to reign with him in the Kingdom. —But, he said, that's not yet. That's later.

That's what this prophecy is referring to. After all these kingdoms, and finally after the papal intervention—we'll talk about that momentarily—there will be a kingdom established in which the saints will reign. That puts that kingdom at the end of the Christian era—not the end of the Jewish era—but at the end of the Christian era.

Let's read more about this, because (although that was the interpretation) that was So brief, Daniel said, You know, I wouldn't mind a little more detail. —So, Daniel says, in verse 19, I would like the truth of the fourth beast, the one that was different from all the others. That one who was exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were like iron, his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.

And those ten horns that were in his head, and the other which came up later, before whom three fell; that horn that had eyes, and that big mouth speaking great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I want to know more about that.

Then Daniel says something that we didn't know before.

He goes on to say what that horn does: I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. —We didn't know that before. We didn't know that this horn was warring against the very saints who later take the Kingdom. This speaks of a time when this horn would persecute the saints of the Most High.

Verse 22: Until the Ancient of Days would come, and vindication (the word that some translations use) was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. —That's this little horn that finally gives way to the Kingdom of Christ. Now, in the next few verses, we're told how

long this horn is going to rule. We're ready to need the next few verses, see the time- prophecy—get the exact dates involved, and suddenly we run into a break.

We're getting to the point again, of the time- prophecy itself, which is So important to our study this evening.

In Daniel 7, verse 23: The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, diverse from all the kingdoms. —Verse 24: The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall rise: Various Protestant expositors have given a list of ten kings, ten breakdowns of the Old Roman Empire as it began to fade out, ten tribes that inhabited Europe that were kind of the residue of the Old Roman Empire. I've seen a couple of different lists of those, and I don't have a convicted view of precisely the right identification, but pretty much all Protestant expositors acknowledge that these are ten countries that are the fragments of the Old Roman Empire.

You see how those ten horns parallel very nicely the ten toes here, of the Image. Ten and ten, and that's the fragmentation of the Old Roman Empire.

In Daniel 2, it says that the legs were iron, and the feet were part of iron and part of clay. What does that clay represent? Over here, we see that great horn (that we claim is going to be the papal institution—we'll verify that more later); it's an ecclesiastical system, but it ruled as a government. Over here, when we have iron—like the strength of civil government—mixed with clay, what is that clay? That clay is probably the ecclesiastical. That's the way the whole history of Europe was, from that time forward for more than a thousand years. If you ever look on a map of Europe, of the Middle Ages, you'll see—if they color the map to indicate different power locations—it's speckled with civil rulers and then ecclesiastical rulers. The bishops were actually rulers of their little segments. Europe was mixed with civil and ecclesiastical.

You remember that stone that finally strikes that image and the whole thing crumbles? That stone is the Kingdom of Christ. That stone is the real thing. That clay is imitation stone. The imitation kingdom of Christ that ruled for a thousand years during the age was an imitation Millennium. That's like the papacy. That's like the false church.

I want to emphasize—as much as we're talking about the Roman Catholic Church—I am not against Roman Catholic people.

We're talking about institutions. I happen to be a United States citizen. I'm not against United States citizens. I'm one of them. But this country, the United States, is not going to be God's Kingdom, either. All the kingdoms of this world must fall in deference to the incoming kingdom. When we're talking about structures, organizations, politics, don't get too personally attached. We're talking about symbolisms of history—what actually occurred, and what's going to occur. If I talk about one church or another, it doesn't mean there are not good, godly people in them, or have been. But the institutions themselves have not been what they claimed to be. They have not been God's kingdom established on earth. That's our point.

Da 7:25: He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

That's a mystical expression, but there's time involved. That's the time prophecy: A time and times and the dividing of time. —

But the judgment will sit. They will take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, my countenance changed: but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel didn't understand all these things. We'll see later, in Chapter 12, the angel specifically said, Daniel, it's not time yet to understand all these things. There's going to come a time later, at the time of the end. —But here's a prophecy intended for us—not for him—but for us, living much later.

The prophecy says that this horn was to endure for time, times, and half a time. We have one here. We don't know how many we have here. I suppose we could have 463; it's plural. But the simplest approach would be that it's simply TWO. That's the smallest plural number we have; we'll check this out later, and find that it does fit. And there's a half. —That means that this power is going to rule for three and one-half times, whatever a time is. That's a

time prophecy that's rather difficult to break, because we just don't know what to do with it. At this point, we need help.

We need to go to the Book of Revelation, where this is referred to again. Revelation really becomes what its name says—a revealing of what these prophecies are all about.

We're going to start with Revelation, Chapter 13. We mentioned last night that the first 13 chapters of Revelation take place during the Christian era—not during the Harvest, and not during the Kingdom.

Chapter 13 shows us all the systems that have been produced upon the Christian earth that have not been so good. —I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. —Those seven heads are corollary to what we see in Daniel 7. The lion has one, the bear has one, the leopard (unusually) has four, and the beast here has one. There is a total of seven heads and ten horns, just as you see here. You get the idea that Revelation is dealing with something that pertains to these.

Let's see, a little further, the description of this strange beast in Revelation 13. —The beast which I saw was like a leopard. —When I looked at it, that's what it looked like. —There's a leopard. His feet were the feet of a bear. —There's the bear. —His mouth was as the mouth of a lion: There's the lion. And, of course, it had the ten horns. So it has a representation of each one of these, amalgamated into that beast in Revelation 13.

We think the point is that the thing described in Revelation 13, which is the Christian era, is the amalgamation of all the empires that have preceded. Rome amalgamated everything before that. Now, the papacy amalgamates everything inclusive of all that, and that's why this is described in Revelation, not as a horn, not just as a power of the Roman beast, but from another perspective. This Revelation 13 has another beast that is this horn, that does exactly what this horn does. This beast is the papal beast.

That is not just my own interpretation. I agree with it, but it's not unique to me. This goes way back. This goes way back to the Reformation, when godly people began to realize that this symbology is talking about the persecutor of the saints, that had held sway for so long.

We're going to skip down now, to verse 4: They worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who can make war with him? He's So powerful.'

Verse 5: There was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power to continue forty and two months. —That reminds us of this great horn—that big mouth, speaking great, swelling words. We know now that those great words were not good great words, but blasphemous words.

That continued, it says, for forty- two months. —Forty- two months is a whole lot clearer than 3- 1/2 times. —Let's suppose, for a minute, that these 3- 1/2 times are like 3- 1/2 years. See if that would make sense. How many months do we have in a year? 12.

In three years, we would have 36 months. In another half a year, you'd have 6 more. We're up to 42 months! That's the same thing as saying 42 months in prophecy! Revelation has revealed to us the meaning of the three and a half times.

We were right about the supposition that times here really meant TWO because the mathematics all checks out. 3- 1/2 years is 42 months. That's the space of time that Great Papacy is going to rule.

Let's see, in Revelation 13, what it does: It opens its mouth in blasphemy against God (verse 6), to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

It was given unto him to make war with the saints (that's just what Daniel 7 said), to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations.

And they that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

If any man have an ear, let him hear. —Pay attention to this, the prophet said, because this will be important. Your salvation depends upon your faith in Christ—not upon indulgences from a sale. These are the kinds of things that are critical to Christian faith.

Forty- two months is the time- span given to us for this.

Now we want to go to the prophecy in Revelation, Chapter 12. We're backing up one. Revelation 12 tells us about the woman who had to flee into the wilderness for her life.

There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. —This is the Gospel church, clothed with the Gospel Sun, the moon (the Law) under her feet. She has on her head a crown of twelve stars (the apostolic lights).

Now, in verse 2, this is odd: She being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. —That doesn't sound too good. She's pregnant. She's ready to be delivered. There was something festering in the Early Church that wasn't too good.

Paul speaks about this in II Thessalonians 2: 7 when he says: The mystery of iniquity already is working in the church. —The one place where it should never be, the mystery of iniquity was already beginning to work. He saw the incipient stages in his own day. But he says, He that hinders will hinder until he be taken out of the way.

He that hindered was the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was persecuting Christianity, and would not allow it to prosper. Finally, when the Roman Empire was taken out, persecution ceased. Finally, the true church was relieved from persecution, but So was the false church. That's what gave growth to this false system of churchianity which grew through the age.

In Chapter 12, we're going to skip a little bit until we get down to verse 6: And the woman had to flee into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. —The true church had to flee the development of the false church. It says she had to flee into the wilderness for one thousand, two hundred and sixty days.

This is another vision of the same period. If we have forty- two months; how many days are in a month? Technically, thirty, sometimes thirty- one, sometimes twenty- eight in February. Round it all off, a month is generally considered to be thirty days. In prophecy, it is considered to be precisely thirty days. If we take 42 months and we multiply that by 30 days we get exactly $42 \times 30 = 1260$ days.

In Revelation 13, it's 42 months. In Revelation 12, it's 1260 days. In Daniel, 3- 1/2 times. They all are the same period of time.

At this point, you might wonder. It sounds good, but can we be really sure we're linking these together correctly? Is there

something that can assure us that the 1260 days are exactly the 3-1/2 times.

Let's look over further. Revelation, the 12th chapter, we read in verse 14: To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time. —It's perfect. It has made the full circle. It has told us that 1260 days is exactly the same as 3- 1/2 times. All of our deductions seem to be verified. We're right on track.

You already know what I'm going to do with this number 1260 days. I'm going to make it 1260 years. That's the key to prophecy. This prophecy started in the Book of Daniel. Daniel gave us the vision of the 70 weeks of years to prove to us how to understand prophetic time. The very vision in Daniel that gave us this 3- 1/2 times gives us the clue in Chapter 9, a day for a year. We saw that in the 430 days of Ezekiel—430 years, 21- day delay of Daniel—21 years, 40 days of spying the land—40 years in the wilderness. Now we have, finally, the 1260 days, or 1,260 years of persecution some time during the Christian era.

When? That's the big question. Where do we date its beginning? Where do we date its ending?

If this really is papacy, and they really ruled from Rome—that seven- hilled city we talked about last night, in Revelation 17? That's Rome.

That's the great city that rules over the kings of the earth, that finally is going to be destroyed by God's judgment. We have to look at Rome to find out when this power began.

We look at Rome. We notice that the prophecy of Daniel said: Three horns would be uprooted. —Let's go back and figure out what happened to Rome that was a precursor to this.

Rome ruled the world for centuries. It was a mighty empire which nobody could seem to squash. But, as things happened, it began to decline—moral corruption, decay set in. It began to weaken. It began to be divided. It was the time of the early popes, the time of Constantine, when he took it upon himself to re- unify the empire under—well, why not? —his own control.

He conquered. For a while, he had companions with him, associates. Finally, he conquered all. Recognizing that Rome was

in a period of decline, Constantine decided to move his capital eastward to Byzantium. He moved his whole empire, and took the city—the capital city of Rome—and moved his empire over to Turkey, what we know as Turkey today.

The humble man that he was, he decided to re-name the city Constantinople—what better name? That's where Constantinople came from. That means the whole of the Roman Empire is centered now in the East.

He actually divided the empire for administrative purposes—just like America has 50 states for administrative purposes. He divided his empire into two. He had the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire.

This is interesting to me, that this vision of the two legs shows two divisions. Is that coincidence or intent? I can't be sure. But at least the Roman Empire was in two parts as time went on. Then, as time went on even further, the Western Empire decayed even further. In 476, they were sacked by the Vandals. The Heruli took over. Finally, the Heruli were uprooted by the Ostrogoths. We have the Western Roman Empire, we have the Heruli, we have the Ostrogoths. That's three horns!

When did that third horn fall? Who took over after that third horn lost its power? We have to go back to a time of the 500s A.D., the time when in the East an emperor named Justinian had taken control. He was one of the most powerful of the emperors that ever ruled from the East. His reign was 40 or 50 years long. He established the Justinian Code of Law.

Justinian said, My control over Rome has languished. I'm going to send an army back to Rome to capture it. —He did. He took his prize general, Belisarius.

Justinian sent Belisarius back to Rome with a contingent of armed men, with instructions to recapture Rome and Italy for the Emperor Justinian.

At this time, there was a war going on in the Christian world between leaders. There was a leader in the East. There was the patriarch of Constantinople. There was the papa in Rome. There was conflict. Who was going to be acknowledged as greatest? In the year 533, Justinian made a decree that henceforward the Bishop of Rome would be recognized as the supreme pontiff of all

the Christian churches. That's pretty good. If I were the pope at that time, I would have appreciated that.

There's only one problem. The pope was really not in control. The Ostrogoths were in control, and they were not friendly to the pope. They had a big controversy. The Ostrogoths were not friendly to him at all. There was a conflict there.

Justinian sends his army over to Rome, and there are years of battle going back and forth, between the forces of Belisarius, the general of Justinian, and the Goths. You will find this history written in great detail because that general Belisarius was so famous for his exploits that he actually had a historian assigned to him. He had his own personal, traveling historian to narrate the episodes that were going on.

That historian was known by the name of Procopius, and he wrote a copious version of the war, written in the Greek language, and available to this day. I can't read Greek, unfortunately, but fortunately people do, and they translate that into English, and Oxford University publishes a several-volume edition of the works of Procopius.

We can find the account of that war, blow by blow, and see what's going on. I have those on my shelf at home. I didn't bring them here. I was traveling on the plane, a little bit pack-light. But anybody can access those, in any Bible library, and see the exact account of the wars that went on.

What happened was that in the year 538, we came to a time in this war when the Goths were sieging Rome. The Goths seem to have been quite powerful at that time. The Goths were all around Rome, sieging the city. Finally, this siege lasted quite long, they began to weaken the siege, and this small force of Belisarius was able to overcome them.

They broke the siege, they left Rome, and they headed back for Ravenna, which was the capital of the Gothic stronghold. Belisarius left Rome, and went out to pursue his enemies. He has a problem. Who does he leave in charge of the city? He has to find an ally somewhere. Justinian has already decreed that the pope will be the head of all Christian churches. There is Belisarius's ally. Belisarius said, I'm going to leave Rome in the hands of the pope.

That, for the first time in history, is the first time that the bishop of Rome got control as a political ruler in control of the city of Rome. That was the year 538.

That wasn't quite all that he needed. He needed the Gothic power to be vanquished. That happened the next year, in 539. Now, his enemies were vanquished. They bubbled up, from time to time. Everything wasn't totally clean. There were ins and outs, one force against another. But 539, with the fall of Ravenna, was the date when the bishop of Rome really came into his glory. We're going to propose that that is the date to start the 1260 years.

We have to verify that, at this end, to see what happened. 1260 years later would bring you to the year 1799. 1799 would be the termination of the power of papacy to rule with a high hand. Prophecy says that for 1260 days, that is years, papacy would have this power.

What happened at this period of history? Ten years before, in 1789, there was a French Revolution. That was in France, not Italy. That wouldn't hurt the pope too much—except that France was a very strong papal ally. Papal France collapsed at that time. We're going to see that in prophecy, in just a moment, very precisely.

Subsequent to that, when Napoleon finally got in power, when the French Directory got in power, they sent a General Berthier to Rome to take the pope prisoner. They took the pope prisoner out of Rome in 1798, just 1260 years after he got control of Rome. The next year, in 1799, the pope (who had been taken prisoner back to France) died in jail as a prisoner, and Napoleon would not allow the election of a successor. Papacy was broken.

Even in Catholic encyclopedias, this date is referred to as the nether, the very lowest point, of fortunes of papacy in modern times. Their power was completely dissolved. It wasn't until the next year that, finally, neutral nations said, We'll give you a forum for the cardinals to meet—to elect another pope, and they did. But that year was the breaking of their power, and they never again had the power to crown and uncrown kings, from that time forward. Napoleon crowned himself a few years later. The pope was invited as an observer only. We think that date of 1799 does fit.

Now let's look in prophecy. Turn to Revelation, the 11th chapter. Let's see how precisely this experience is recorded, at the end of the 1260 years. Revelation 9:14 begins the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet. That sixth trumpet continues to blow through Chapter 9,

Chapter 10, and Chapter 11 until you get to verse 15. Everything we're going to refer to now is occurring during Trumpet period 6. You can see from our handout that the date 1799 would fit in that time, in the Sixth Trumpet. It's the right period in history that Revelation is describing.

Now, let's look for the precise symbols. We see in Chapter 9, verse 14, the Sixth Angel sounded and said, Loose the four angels bound in the great River Euphrates, and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year. — I'm not going to read all the intervening scriptures. It's a very interesting prophecy. But the point I want to emphasize is that at a certain hour there was a great disruption during the Sixth Trumpet. Now let's flip over to Chapter 11 and see something more about that hour. Verse 13: The same hour there was a great earthquake—a great upheaval, a great revolution. —And a tenth part of the city fell, in the earthquake. —Whenever you hear ten, you think back to the lessons in Daniel: there were ten horns, there were ten toes to the image, the ten divisions of Europe.

The ten divisions of Europe were the ten countries of Europe. They existed down through the age. They changed names from time to time, but they were ten countries, ten divisions of Europe. One of those countries fell at the time of that hour of the earthquake. That was France. That was the French Revolution. The French Revolution occurred, and one-tenth of the city of Christendom collapsed at that time.

Let's go back to the early part of Chapter 11, and connect this with what else happens in that very era. In Chapter 11:1, we read: There was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, 'Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshipers.

Whenever you read about measuring, interpret judging. — Remember Daniel, the 7th chapter, the judgment shall sit, and they will take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. —There's a judgment process undergoing.

Now we read something else, in verse 2, about forty-two months that the holy city, the church, will be trodden under foot. 42 months = 1260 days. That's the period that the holy city, the church, would be trodden and persecuted by the great papal system.

Then we read, in verse 3: During that 42 months, My two witnesses will prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days (that long; that's the seventh appearance of this prophecy which we've seen) clothed in sackcloth.

Who are these two witnesses? This is one of those engaging questions at which many Christians have looked. Who are the two witnesses? If you read a little further, you will see that they are described as those who have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. —Elijah did that. —And smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. —Moses did that.

That gives us two names, Moses and Elijah.

Revelation is talking symbols. Do we think Moses and Elijah popped up at the French Revolution and did something? Or were living somewhere for 1260 years? No.

Moses and Elijah are symbolic of God's two prophets that have endured in a mournful condition, all the time that papacy was in power. What are those two prophets? I refer you to Zechariah, Chapter 4, where the two lampstands are these two prophets.

Zechariah talks about two olive trees. Olive trees produce oil. Oil represents the holy spirit. There are two pipes going from these olive trees into a bowl. This bowl feeds the lampstand. We've seen the symbology of the lampstand before. If the reservoir of God's holy spirit that feeds the lampstand with the spirit to the church—providing enlightenment, understanding, knowledge, information—what's the source from which we gather all of our information about God's plan? It's the Word of God, the Truth.

How many parts are there to this? There are 66 books, but there are two basic divisions. There is the Old Testament, and there is the New Testament. Those are the two divisions of God's Word. We propose that these two witnesses in Revelation—Elijah representing the New Testament (he's a type of the church; that's why Jezebel is the great enemy of the church in Revelation), and Moses (So attached to the old Law Covenant) pictures the Old Testament. These are God's spokesmen that have spoken for 1260 years in a very mournful condition.

The Catholic church today does not object to Bible study. But this is quite new. A person named Tyndale was burned at the stake for daring to translate it into the English language. Wycliffe translated it into the English language. They couldn't get him while he was

alive, So years later they dug up his bones and burned them. (If I had to be burned, I'd prefer that way.)

Tyndale, as he was perishing at the stake, like Samson of old—in the temple, he prayed God, One more time, give me a victory. — God did it, and Samson perished. When Tyndale was expiring at the stake, in the flames, he said, God, open the eyes of the king of England. Tyndale was a British subject. God heard that prayer. Not many years after that, there was translated what has come worldwide to be the most popular version of the Bible ever. It's the King James version, authorized by the king of England. God heard that prayer, and He prevailed to make sure that those Two Witnesses were not expunged when they began to speak again. They were still in a mournful condition until the papal power to persecute was over.

Let's look in Revelation 11 and see what happened to the Scriptures after all of this transpired. They've been witnessing in a mournful condition for 1260 years. Now, in verse 7, When they finished their testimony, they're killed. —

In verse 8, Their bodies lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified. — That doesn't sound too good. The Scriptures, for 1260 years, were prophesying in sackcloth. Now, at the end, when we would expect them to rise to glory and prominence, they're killed. What sense does that make?

We go back to history, it does make sense. It turned out that, during the French Revolution, (this always seemed peculiar to me, but it's a matter on record) the Parliament of the French Revolution, So antagonistic to papacy which had oppressed them So long—and it was terrible oppression, rose up and destroyed everything they could. They legally abolished Christianity. France subsequently became the Empire of Europe. Christianity was dead. The Two Witnesses were dead.

Soon, Napoleon realized that most of the people were still Christian, and So (for expediency's sake) he had to reestablish Christianity again. He made a Concordat to reestablish Christianity. As near as we can date that, it was 1803- 4, made and effected. There's a theological work by McClintock and Strong that refers to this. You'll see it under Concordat, which is an official name for an agreement with the pope. Napoleon concluded a concordat with the pope in this era. It was to reestablish

Christianity. Reestablishing Papacy wasn't so good, but it allowed all of Christianity to flourish again.

That was the period of the death of the Two Witnesses; the Scriptures say 3- 1/2 days. —That would be 3- 1/2 years. It fits the period of what actually occurred.

Let's see what happens next, in Revelation 11. Verse 11: After three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. They stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon all them which saw them.

They heard a great voice from heaven saying, 'Come up hither.' And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

I think that that describes what happened after this period. This was the time in history when the British Bible Society, the French Bible Society, the German Bible Society, the American Bible Society began to spring up. In the years subsequent to this, the half dozen, dozen years, after that, Bible Societies in the Christian world sprung up almost like weeds.

They began proliferating current translations of the Bible into common languages, by the millions. This was unheard of, before this. It's just a matter of Christian history. This was the time when the Scriptures really ascended to heaven and began to have a worldwide impact again. It exactly fulfills the testimony of prophecy.

If you really want to get into precise details with many of the prophecies that are contained in Daniel and Revelation, you will find that many of the current, published, respected works are too liberal to care too much about this. You have to go back to the 1800s to really get some deep studies into the prophecies. There are some contemporary good studies, but a lot of the real wealth of information from the Scripture—the Bible helps that we use today—Strong's Concordance, Young's Concordance, Smith's Bible Dictionary, McClintock and Strong's—many of these helps that many Christians have used, came from the 1800s. This was the result of the Bible flourishing, and Bible study being renewed.

That was the time also, and the next decade following, that there was a large movement in the Christian world—largely in America, but also in Europe—to look forward to the Second Coming of Christ. It was known as the Adventist Movement.

I've referred to the Adventist Movement a couple of times. I'm not an Adventist. I'm one of many Christians, however, who appreciate the studies of the Adventists back then. I realize that this was an opening up of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, intended not for one group or another, but for Christians generally who have a concern for the prophecy of those days.

This was the time when the Bible really began to shed its light. We have a very precise prophecy.

I believe, because the 3- 1/2 years are historically the time when the Bible was theoretically dead, that this 1260 years does terminate with 1799 and it does start with 539. Some other Christians might say, No, I like 538 and 1798 better. —That's fine—a year or two either way. But we're certainly in the right area of prophecy, and it's been very precisely demonstrated with the conclusion of this period as well as the fine history about the beginning of this period. This is the Time of the End.

Let's go back to the Book of Daniel. In Daniel, the 12th chapter, we find one more mention of this prophecy. —At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of thy people: there shall be a time of trouble. —Verse 2 describes the resurrection to follow.

Verse 4: Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. —Verse 4 has often been misunderstood, but it's pleasant that the misunderstanding hasn't been too bad—it's kind of a nice thought—about the increase of knowledge generally.

Many running to and fro literally means coming and going, and sometimes refers to ships coming and going in a harbor, but also refers to the coming and going of eyes as they read over the pages, like a prophecy.

What the angel is really saying is, The prophecy will be sealed until the time of the end. Many people will review these prophecies, and knowledge will be increased. —The prophecy will come to be understood. Daniel couldn't understand it, but at the time of the end, it would be understood.

Verse 5: Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the rivers, 'How long shall it be to the end of all these things? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, 'It shall be for a time, times, and an half; when he shall have finished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

That tells us again, one last testimony, that for a time, times and a half, that's when all this trouble will take place. Finally, the power to persecute the church will be completed at the conclusion of that time, times, and a half.

Then we read, in verse 8: I heard, but I didn't understand: then I said, 'O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?' —what will be the result? the consequence?

And he said, 'Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up, and they're sealed till the time of the end. —Daniel couldn't understand them, the things written by those prophets were not for them. They were for us. They were for our benefit. He couldn't possible grasp the intervening experiences.

Verse 10: Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked will do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand (these words—the book, this prophecy); but the wise shall understand. —When? When will the wise understand?

From the time that the daily sacrifice be taken away, and the abomination set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. —We already have 1260 days. Add 30 days more, to make 1290 days, that would take you to about the year 1829. That's about the time that the Adventist movement in America really began in earnest.

As I said, I'm not an exponent for Adventism. I'm not an Adventist myself. It's just like the Reformation: it's a movement that took place in the Christian world which we note occurred according to prophecy. I think Revelation 9 prophesied the Reformation, prophesied the coming of Martin Luther and the breaking open of

the stranglehold upon the Christian world. The Adventist Movement was not a sect, not a denomination originally.

The Adventist Movement was all the ministers and laity and all those who were in the various churches that began to see that the prophecies of Daniel were due to be understood. They began to look forward to their climax and the return of Christ. That's about the time that these things began to open up, 1829.

I was interested—my wife had a devotional book called Streams in the Desert. A lot of Christians appreciate it. I don't know who publishes it. There are several volumes to it. I think it was the citation by Muller, a very famous man of the 1800s, that casually remarked that, by the leading of the heavenly Father, it was about the year 1829 when he first began to take an interest in these deeper things. When she read that to me, I just stopped. I asked her to repeat that. 1829? Remarkable! I knew that date. I didn't know that fact. Of course, I won't insist that because he said that date, it has to be exactly right. But it's in that period of history.

That's the time that the Adventists began to pronounce, The Lord is at hand. —Why did they say that? Because of these very prophecies we're looking at.

William Miller, who was one of the significant people in this movement, believed that this started in 538 and ended in 1798. We've adjusted that by one year for the reasons we've indicated. That was the foundation cornerstone of his movement, and all Christians who are now anticipating the soon arrival of Christ basically can trace an incipient interest in this issue back to that movement in Christianity.

The prophecy says, The wise shall understand. —Was there a time, in this period of history, when the wise of Christianity, the faithful, the studious, those who were concerned with the appearance of Messiah—was there a time when there was a movement to understand these prophecies? There was. —The things that are secret are unto God, but the things that are revealed are unto us and our children, and all of those who have an interest to learn. These things are now available to us. They fit the history of Christianity perfectly.

We are in the Time of the End today. The Time of the End took us to 1799. That was the end of Papacy's power to persecute. From that time forward, we should expect the setting in order of many of the truths wiped out during the Dark Ages—to refresh and

enlighten and give us hope in the Divine Plan. We're going to talk about some of those truths in the days coming up.

We should expect the prophecies of Daniel to be unfolding before us, and give us light to our paths. Peter said, You do well to take heed unto the word of prophecy, as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place until the day dawn—until the day of the new Kingdom dawn in your hearts. We do well to take heed to these prophecies. It's So exciting to see the precise fulfillment which shows us the journey of the Christian church is near its end.

The privileges and the responsibilities accrue to the church at the end of the age, to anoint our eyes with eye salve. We begin to see clearer, away from the dogmas of the old Dark Ages. That's today. That's our privilege. That's our blessing.

DAY 4—THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar, day 4, focused on the Return of Christ.

For 2000 years, Christians have been pinning their hopes and prayers on the return of our Lord and Savior. Tonight, David Rice will examine what the Bible says prophetically about that subject. You're in for a soul- stirring insight into, not only the Time and Manner, but also the Purpose of Christ's return.

DAVID: Dear friends, I'm So pleased to see you back tonight. We're going to get right to the heart of the issue to which we've been building for some days. It's the subject of the Lord's return. All the prophecies of Daniel, at which we've been looking, have been building to this subject.

You remember we talked about the stirring in the Christian world, more than a hundred years ago, based upon the prophecies of Daniel which we have been examining. They aroused the Christian world to look again for the soon- return of our Lord and Master.

We're going to focus on that this evening. We're going to, as we did last night, review a little bit of what we said the previous nights. We're going to review a little bit of what we talked about yesterday. Yesterday, we got to the heart of the issue of the time prophecy of the Time of the End, which is (by itself) the single, most fundamental Time Prophecy contained in Scripture.

We say that because we gauge that by virtue of its being repeated So many times. This single prophecy of time duration has been stated seven times in Scripture—in Revelation and in Daniel, in several chapters—seven times.

We remember that it was stated in Daniel, the 7th chapter, that the saints would be persecuted for a long period of oppression, called three and a half times. —When we went to Revelation, the 13th chapter, we saw that the same prophecy in Daniel—about a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a ten- horned beast—was brought to our attention in Revelation 13—the same symbols—to show us the next development of that.

Remember, in Revelation 13, we saw the Great Beast come out of the Sea, that looked like a leopard, had teeth like a lion, had paws like a bear, and it had ten horns, like that last beast. This showed that this Great Beast is the amalgamation and fruition of all things that have gone before it. We remember that, historically, what actually occurred (after the Roman empire fell) was that Rome itself became the possession, came under the control of the governorship, of the pope himself.

Revelation and Daniel, as we saw last night in quite explicit detail, affirm that that system ruled for a long period of time, described in Revelation as 42 months and 1260 days, and Daniel's reference to 3- 1/2 times is exactly the same as 42 months.

That is the same as 1260 days.

When you consider that three and a half times might be prophetic years in duration, and there are 12 months in a year, there would be 36 months in three years, and 42 months in 3- 1/2 years. That's exactly the time that is stated in Revelation 13.

In Revelation, the 12th chapter, you remember, it also states this time when the woman, the church, had to flee into the wilderness for her life. It was stated to be 1260 days, and 42 months of 30 days apiece is exactly 1260 days.

To make sure that we close the loop on this, that everything is really referring to the same thing, that same chapter (Revelation 12) says, by way of repetition, that the woman flees into the wilderness for 3- 1/2 times. —It's completed the loop. Daniel states this. Revelation 13 says this. Revelation 12 says this and this. Revelation, the 11th chapter, also gives us the 1260 days and

42 months in two scriptures right next to each other. These are all the same period.

There are 1260 prophetic days in duration, when some system during the Christian era would have the power to persecute the saints in a very violent way, until finally that power was judged and curtailed and brought to an end.

In our whole buildup of prophecy, we have observed that a day is fulfilled as a year. You remember the 40 days the spies were out spying the land, the punishment was a year for every day—forty years wandering in the wilderness.

Then we tested that with a specific prophecy in the Book of Ezekiel. —Ezekiel directly mentions that Ezekiel was to lie on his side for 430 days, and that that would represent a long period of punishment for Israel. We traced through history that that fit precisely from the giving of the prophecy to 430 years later when Israel was freed from that burden by God's freeing them at the time of the Maccabees.

Then we saw, in Daniel the 10th chapter, that a 21- day delay of the angel fit exactly a 21- year delay of the rebuilding of the temple.

Then we focused on that 490 days prophesied in Daniel the 9th chapter, taking us to the crucifixion of Messiah 490 years later.

The day- for- a- year principle is very, very clear in Scripture.

This would then turn into a period of 1260 years during which the church would be in jeopardy and the persecuting power would be in strength.

We have gone into considerable detail about what happened to the Roman Empire when it crumbled.

You remember that the prophecy says that this Papal Horn would uproot three horns before it, before it would grow and prosper. We recalled that the Western Roman Empire fell, then the Heruli (a Germanic tribe from the north, which took over Rome) fell to the Ostrogoths, and that THIRD kingdom fell right at this period in history.

It was 538 when the pope got control of Rome, as the governor of Rome. This was the first time he got political domination over the city—539, when its enemies were vanquished.

Counting 1260 years forward, it takes us to 1799. In 1798, the pope was taken prisoner out of Rome. In 1799, he died as a prisoner, and papacy was headless.

Just to be sure we have the right focus on history, we saw that the prophecy in Revelation, Chapter 11 said that, during this period of time, God's Two Witnesses would be prophesying in sackcloth and ashes. You put on sackcloth and ashes when you're mourning and you don't have a very joyous prospect. That's the way the Scriptures were.

The Two Witnesses, you will remember, are the same as the Two Olive Trees standing before the God of the whole earth in the Book of Zechariah, Chapter 4. They are the Old and the New Testament.

The olive tree is good for producing oil, and oil (in the Scriptures) is the holy spirit. These two reservoirs of the holy spirit feed their oil through golden pipes into a bowl that feeds the seven-branch candlestick, the Menorah, that represents in Revelation the Seven Stages of the Church.

That's how we get our light, our illumination. We don't have independent light. We have the Word of God for our light, and the holy spirit is encapsulated here for our instruction.

The Old and New Testaments, during this period, were in a very mournful condition. Some who tried to translate the Bible at this time staked their life on their effort. Tyndale was burned at the stake for this, and others perished even for possessing Bibles. Others were persecuted for just trying to teach more clearly about the Bible during this period of time.

We find the Two Witnesses and the Two Olive Trees several other places. In Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness, the Most Holy represented the Presence of God itself.

The Holy represented our condition during the Christian Era, as we are sons of God, going through the refinement of character before we pass through the veil of death and into the presence of God.

In this area, there is a table with bread on it, representing our food that we eat. This probably represents the Word of God which we

eat and consume as our nourishment. On that table, were two stacks of bread, representing the Word of God. Those TWO stacks of bread are the same as the TWO witnesses, the same as the TWO olive trees, the Old and the New Testament.

There's an interesting thing about these two stacks. You may remember how many pieces of bread were in each stack. It's a memory device to realize that one stack had six pieces of bread in it, and the other stack had six pieces of bread in it, and if you write 6 next to 6 you have 66, the number of books there are in the Bible. (I'm sure, seriously, that's it's intended to represent $6+6=12$ tribes of Israel.)

In Numbers, the 10th chapter, the priests were told to construct some silver trumpets. Only the priests would blow these trumpets. There were two silver trumpets. Those trumpets were to arouse people for congregational meetings, to advance the camp—any important affair in the history of Israel was to be signaled by the two trumpets. That was in the Jewish era.

Now we're in the Christian era, when spiritual Israel has received the promises that were predicted and typified by natural Israel. The two silver trumpets, that only the priests can blow, only the spiritual people of God, are those two trumpets of truth—the Old and New Testament that we have the privilege of using.

An interesting example is this: When our Lord was ready to leave his disciples, they were in the upper room, in the last episode, the last evening of our Lord's human life. Our Lord had told the disciples on other occasions, When you go out, don't bring extra money, don't bring an extra cloak. Go out on faith. —

But now things were going to be different. The Lord was going to be leaving them for a long time, and now he said, You should take extra provision. If you don't have a scrip, find a scrip. Take a scrip with you. Take an extra cloak and shoes. —

Then he said a very strange thing. Another thing would prepare them for their long journey (typically). He asked, Do you have a sword? —The last thing you would expect the Master to ask was to bring a sword. Peter responded, Here are two swords. —Jesus said, That'll be enough. That'll do.

What does the sword represent in Scripture? The Sword of the Spirit. Two swords are the Old and the New Testament.

I don't think that number was either incidental or accidental.

Finally, Revelation 12, where the woman flees into the wilderness for protection for the 1260 years of papal persecution. Revelation 12:14 says, To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place where she is nourished for a time, times and half a time from the face of the serpent.

Flying out as on eagle wings is not a new metaphor. That comes from Isaiah, the 40th chapter: They shall mount with wings as eagles. —That is the Lord's providence to care for His people. You will notice Revelation does not just specify wings, but TWO wings of a great eagle. The Old and the New Testaments were her nourishment out in the wilderness, and her escape and her providence.

Remember the eagle. Remember these wings. Later, we are going to get to a scripture that talks something about eagles in Matthew 24. It's a GOOD sign, not a bad sign. It's a GOOD thing. Eagles are good. That will be a critical point in understanding Matthew 24.

We have realized that the prophecy of Daniel, 12th chapter, gave us another prophecy beyond the time, times and a half. It goes just a little further out to another event. Daniel 12:7: I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people.

Now, go down to verse 11. —From the time that the daily sacrifice be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate be set up (that's when the time, times, and a half start, as well) shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

What is supposed to happen at the end of the thousand two hundred and ninety days? Apparently, what was mentioned in verse 10. —Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

We remember that the 1290 days take us thirty days (years) beyond the 1260 days, and that would be the year 1829. In America, the leader was William Miller, and he had many

supporters. That's about the time it began to pick up steam and really propel forward. In the next fifteen years, the movement gained so much strength that some have claimed that almost ten per cent of America's Christian people were in some way affected or influenced or directed by that movement. It was a large movement.

When their expectations for the return of Christ in 1843-44 did not come to pass, there was a great disappointment.

Great disappointments are nothing new in the Christian world. John 6, the Lord himself said something that was very difficult for his hearers to grasp. He didn't do this or anything else by accident. In John, the 6th chapter, he said, Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. —He was talking to a Jewish audience, which would consider this abhorrent. The Law commands that you should NOT drink blood. There has to be some deeper meaning here. Most of the crowd just turned and walked away.

It says that from that time, many of his disciples followed no longer with him. —It was such a strain in this new movement, that our Lord turned to the twelve disciples and he asked, Will you also go away?

You remember their response. —Where, Lord? You have the words of life. —They didn't understand what he meant by saying they should eat his flesh and drink his blood. We know that's symbolic—his shed life, needed as a ransom. But they didn't understand. But they had faith in the things they did understand, and knew he would make it all clear in due time.

So, with this group of Christians that was disappointed in the 1840s, many of them fell away. That was a test that was—not caused, but—PERMITTED by Heavenly Father to find those with the faith that would push on. It's something like Gideon's band: They began with 32,000, and God said it was too much. Cut it down. Then, there were 10,000. Again, 'way too much. It got down to 300, and Gideon said, Oh, I don't know, but God said, Just right. That's what I want only those who are fully committed.

That's the way the tests have been through the age.

Now we have to look and see, What is the next step of prophecy that points us to the Lord's Return? We're going to study Matthew 24 now. We're going to get deeply into it. Matthew 24 does not

have time prophecy per se. But it has signs about the Lord's Return, and a lot of information about it.

First, we should understand why the Lord is returning. What's the object of his return? That may seem obvious to you. You all know the text in John, the 14th chapter, where Jesus, ready to go away, said, If I go away, I will come back. I will return, and I will receive you unto myself. Where I am, you may be also.

That promise has rung in the ears of Christians ever since that point. The early church began to look forward enthusiastically to the fruition of their hopes, when they would be with the Lord in glory.

Paul wrote to Timothy when he was ready to die. He was in probably the most difficult imprisonment of his experience.

Everything looked pretty bad. Some of Paul's closest friends had deserted him. Others he had sent away on missions. He was lonely. He wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith. —I have kept the faith. I have fought a good fight. Henceforth a crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. —He was looking forward to the time when the Lord would return and receive him to Himself.

That is the goal of all of our hopes, to be with our Lord. We know that goal. We know that purpose. —That is one very important purpose of our Lord's return, to gather His Church.

But there is another purpose as well. We have read about that in Daniel, Chapter 2, and in Daniel, Chapter 7. Let us go back there for a moment and notice what those two prophecies say as one of the fundamental reasons for our Lord's return.

We're going to start with Daniel 2. (This is by way of remembrance; we've read these texts.) In verse 44, we read, explicitly, that after the image is destroyed by that Stone (that's going to strike the image): In the days of these kings shall the God of heavens set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. The kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.

You know that was the interpretation. The dream showed that that stone that smote the image and destroyed it began to grow and enlarge and expand until it grew into a huge mountain that filled the whole earth.

In Bible symbology, a mountain represents a kingdom. When you see the kingdom in Revelation, Chapter 21, John goes to a great, high mountain to see the vision of the Kingdom. There are several times where a mountain represents a kingdom.

What is this kingdom that God is going to establish to fill the earth, that will never be removed and never be replaced? It's the same thing that we read in Daniel, the 7th chapter.

In Daniel 7 has a mention that I think ties right in to the Return of Christ. Daniel 7:13: I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man (that's Jesus) came with the clouds of heaven (that sounds like His Return), and came to the Ancient of Days (that sounds like the heavenly Father on His throne), and they brought him near before Him. And there was given him a dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Those are two very positive prophecies. We know when they fit.

They fit at the return of Christ, and they talk about the establishment of a Kingdom that will be universal. All of this occurs after the period of darkness has come and gone—after the 1260 days of persecution is all over. This is a kingdom which follows the time when the saints are with him in glory.

So, in Daniel, the 7th chapter, when we get to the interpretation of that vision, we read in verses 17 and 18 about four beasts (those great beasts which are four kings or kingdoms which arise) ... and The saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever.

The Lord takes his saints home, but that's not the end of the job. That's only the beginning of the next story. The next story is that the saints, then, are with our Lord Jesus as the rulers of his everlasting Kingdom.

Who is in this Kingdom? Let us pause for a moment, and look at something in the Gospel accounts. We're going to suggest a line of approach about this Kingdom. It is, in our opinion, one of the most sublime messages of the Gospel that has ever been presented.

Let us turn to the Gospel of John, Chapter 1, verse 9. This is the way the Apostle John thought to introduce his gospel and the ministry of Jesus.

In verse 6, we read: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John (the Baptist). The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness of that Light.

Who was that Light? We know the answer to that. That was the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. —That's an amazing statement. It's such a familiar statement. It just rolls off the tongue, and sometimes off the mind of consciousness. It's a sweet expression.

But, catch the import of that. He is the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Are we understanding the full depth of that? Turn to John, the 12th chapter, and see if we're getting the point.

Joh 12:32. John the 12th chapter is the time when Jesus has ridden into Jerusalem. He's been acclaimed Hosanna before the crowds. You might think it's the time of his absolute victory. But Jesus knows it's just the beginning. Back in verse 24, he talked about his death—a corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying.

He has his death in mind, when we come to verse 32. He says, I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

What does he mean, being lifted up from the earth? Would he mean his glorification, after his post-resurrection appearances? No. That's not the point. The very next verse tells us that that wasn't his point. His point is, He said this, signifying what death he should die.

The people apparently got the idea. They knew what being lifted up was. They were familiar with crucifixion. You lift somebody up on the cross and lift it up until he doesn't move any more. That's what lifted up means here.

They said, This is confusing. —They got the idea that he was talking about his death. They said, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abides forever. How do you say that the Son of Man must be crucified? Who is the Son of Man? —Of course that's Jesus.

Notice what Jesus said, I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. —This is just what John 1:9 said. —He is the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. —

How is that possible? Has Jesus enlightened every man that has come into the world? He hasn't? Impossible. Many people have lived and died without ever hearing of the only name under heaven whereby they must be saved. How does this text fit?

We suggest that the resolution is what we have read in the Book of Daniel. In the Book of Daniel, it prophesies that there will be a kingdom established that will never perish. During that kingdom, there will be a resurrection of every man, woman, and child who ever lived. They will finally receive a full, unconditional, unambiguously clear grasp of what the terms of salvation are about.

Jesus was the very Son of God, the choicest treasure that could be sent. He was the Gift that God gave for the payment of our sins.

Let's say that you are going to help somebody out with a large gift. Let's say that your child—a group of people are in captivity. I think of the Iran situation years ago, where 52 people were captive for a long time. They insisted upon a large ransom. You pay the ransom, high price millions of dollars. You go over to the group, and you say, Go free. —

Would you forget to tell the rest of it? No. You wouldn't do that. Having paid such a large ransom, you would announce that far and wide, and have them all accept their deliverance.

What about God's plan? He has given the choicest treasure He has, and yet many people have lived and died and never heard of the only name whereby they can be saved.

We propose the answer is, what Jesus said in Matthew 5:28: The hour is coming in which all who are in their graves will hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth—some to life (because they have been faithful) and some to judgment (whereby they can learn, be examined, be tested, and hope to gain the everlasting life of the believers).

You know that, if God cared enough to give His only Son, He cares enough to try to reclaim everybody who is willing to be reclaimed. God will not reclaim anybody who doesn't want to be. Everyone is a free moral agency with a free moral will, and it is

everyone's choice to say Yes or No—to frustrate or cooperate with the Divine Purpose to reclaim them.

Is there more that God could do than He has done So far, to reclaim people who are ignorant of the terms of salvation? Yes. There is something He can do which He has not yet done. He could make the message of salvation unambiguously clear to every person on earth, and He has not.

As a matter of fact, He could remove the influence of the Adversary altogether So that there could be no misunderstanding about the terms of salvation.

Is He proposing to do such a thing? He is. We read the reference to Revelation, Chapter 20, which indicates that God is going to bind Satan's influence totally.

There is the Bottomless Pit, from which dormant doctrines came out, during the Reformation. Look at that Pit again (Revelation, the 20th chapter). Revelation 20:1: I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and that he must be loosed a little season.

For some strange reason, he's going to let him out again. We'll explain that shortly.

During this Thousand- Year Kingdom, discussed in this future part of Revelation, he's going to thoroughly remove every vestment of ignorance, and every influence that would be adverse to people receiving the message and the terms of salvation. That is the time when the words of Jesus will be fulfilled—that he will lighten literally every man who has come into the world, and he will draw all men unto him. All will not respond. Some never will. Revelation 20 makes it very clear that there will be judgment and there will be some who will refuse God's grace.

But he will allow everyone to have a full, fair opportunity for life.

That leads to the obvious question: If God is intending to do that at some time (and these scriptures seem clear that He is), why hasn't he already done it? Why has He waited So long to get on with the program of establishing the Kingdom of Christ? What has He been doing for two thousand years?

He has been doing an extremely important work. He has been letting the Gospel message of faith go out to the world, to find those receptive hearts that will let that seed grow in their heart followers of the Master under difficult situations, under adverse conditions. These have been conditions that have caused them to struggle for their faith, to struggle for the establishment of the necessary Christian character—to even suffer the persecutions from those that are in darkness.

Why such a hard road for the few who will believe? Why not make it easy for them? Because these comparatively few believers in Christ, these who will take that seed, and grow and prosper amidst adversity, will be the special jewels in God's hand—the ones that He is going to exonerate to be a part of the Bride of Christ, to rule and bless the rest of the world.

Notice in Revelation 20—That is exactly what their position is, in the next few verses. All of Revelation 20 is occurring at the time of the Lord's Return. This is on our subject directly. In verse 4, we read something that is a little difficult, partly because of the translation and partly because of the symbols.

It says: I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. —The word judgment really means verdict, the sentence. It's not the power to judge; it's the verdict that's been handed down. What this vision is saying is, We're at a time of transition. He sees the rulers of this world's powers, and a verdict and sentence is handed down upon them. They're going to fall. Like the prophet in the Old Testament said, All the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones.

If they're going to come down, who will be the new rulers who will take over? We already know from Daniel that the new rulers are Christ and the saints who have been afflicted. Here it basically says the same thing.

The remainder of verse 4 says, I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, which had not worshiped the beast, or his image, and who had not received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and

they (if you're reading King James, it's not a bad translation but it's easy to miss the thought) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

That's literally correct, but there's a thought behind the word lived.

The word lived there, in the New American Standard, would be raised to life. —They were raised to life! These are the dead saints. Like the Apostle Paul, they were waiting for their deliverance. They were waiting for the Lord's Return when they would receive their crown of glory.

The saints are raised to life. They are the new rulers. They reign with Christ a thousand years.

What do they reign over? Who do they reign over? If they are going to be kings, there have to be subjects. In the prophecy of Daniel, the 7th chapter, it was very explicit. All languages, tongues, peoples, shall serve God in that Kingdom. The saints are to be the rulers with Christ in that Kingdom.

Notice verse 6. Revelation 20:6 gives us another point about what the saints are going to be doing during this time. —Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. —Those are the saints. —On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.

A king exercises rulership and authority over others. What does a priest do? A priest is an intercessor between God and men. He brings people to God. As priests, the role of the church, beyond the veil as the Bride of Christ in the Kingdom, is going to be to help rule over the world and gather into the fold of God all those who are willing to become obedient to the will of Christ.

That is the grand, sublime hope that the Gospel holds forth. As we go farther in this chapter, we will see that God says, There has to be a test. There has to be a test to find those that will follow Christ sincerely, and those who will not. —That's why Satan is let loose from his prison at the end of the thousand years.

Remember when Adam was created? Adam was created with the prospect of never dying. He wasn't created to die. He was created to lived forever. The prospect was, If you're obedient, you will not

die, but if you're disobedient you will die. —Who would choose to be disobedient? Adam wanted to live.

Eve was created. What a lovely woman! You have this expression, A marriage made in heaven. —This IS a marriage made in heaven. Eve was created to be the perfect helpmate for Adam. I'm sure they were deeply in love.

Then came the most severe test that could be put upon a man like Adam. Adam didn't just sloppily fall into sin. Eve was deceived, and she ate. Adam knew the consequences. There's only one person on the face of the earth besides himself. He is deeply in love with her.

Is he going to join with her, and suffer the consequences with her? Or is he going to let her go into death alone, unknowing how this will turn out? That's the test that Adam faced. It was not a simple test.

Put yourself back in Adam's position. You realize how strong the emotions are, in this test. This was not just a sloppy performance. This was a real test.

Adam could have passed the test. He had the wherewithal to pass. He could have chosen to do right, but he didn't have enough faith. He didn't have enough experience. He didn't have enough confidence. He didn't have enough dealing with God to recognize that, if he was just trustful, God would work it out.

God permitted it to transpire, and Adam and Eve suffered the consequences, and the whole human race has been dying ever since then, for 6000+ years.

Then God told them there would be hope of deliverance. He said that, through the seed of the woman would come a Deliverer some day that would crush the serpent, the deceiver, and presumably rescue them.

That seed of promise—that hope of promise—seemed dormant for awhile, but it wasn't, really. It kept going through Seth and then onward, and finally it got to a man of faith named Abraham. It was to Abraham that the promises were made, In thee and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. —Then God said, Your seed is as the stars of heaven and as the sands of the seashore for multitude.

Do we have a little hint there, by the holy spirit, about the blessing that will be brought through the Abrahamic seed? The stars of heaven could represent the spiritual, and all the masses of mankind raised to life again for their chance for life, after the Bride of Christ has been complete.

We think this is the plan of God that is involved in the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. The purpose of the return of Christ is two- fold. It is (1) to take his saints home with him, and (2) to establish his Millennial Kingdom on earth So that he can reclaim all those who will become willing and obedient at that time.

We want to get on to Matthew 24, but there are one or two scriptures we must consider for we get right there. I want to show you a prophecy back in Ezekiel, —The prophecy in Ezekiel, Chapter 16, tells how God is going to arrange the administration of that Kingdom. He's talking to His people Israel, that the world has known as the children of God in the Jewish era. He chastises them rather severely for their iniquity.

Eze 16:46 comes after He has gone through a whole repertoire of what He has done on their behalf.

It says: Thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell on thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwells on thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters. —

He's going to compare Judah and Jerusalem to Samaria and Sodom. We all know who Sodom was, of Sodom and Gomorrah fame. They're the wicked people that God took away as He saw good.

Verse 47: You have not walked after their ways, nor done after their abominations: but, as if that were a very little thing, you were corrupted more than they in all thy ways.

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, 'Sodom hasn't done, not she nor her daughters, as you have done, you and your daughters.

This was their iniquity, pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters. She didn't strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. They were haughty, and committed abomination: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

But you have done worse. Judah and Jerusalem have done even worse. This is probably the source of our Lord's comments in Matthew where he says to the Scribes and Pharisees that represented Jerusalem and Judah. He says: In the judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom because you have done worse than they. —I think he's remembering this passage from Ezekiel.

Verse 51: Neither hath Samaria committed half thy sins.

In verse 53, He says, When I shall bring their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.

That is strange language. What is he talking about? Sodom is long since gone. When will He bring the captivity of Sodom? There are no inhabitants of Sodom remaining. They're gone. He says He's going to bring the captives of Sodom back again. This has to be in the resurrection. As Jesus said, In the judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for Judah. —That must be talking about the Kingdom and the resurrection of the dead.

That is the only time Sodom will ever be brought back again. He says, When I do that, then I'm going to bring you back, as well.

Verse 54: You will bear your shame, and be confounded in all that you have done, and you will be a comfort to them. —They'll think, We didn't do as badly as God's people did. We did badly, but Israel did even worse.

Verse 55: When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then you and your daughters shall return to your former estate.

Verse 60: Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed, when you receive your sisters, Sodom and Samaria: and I will give them to you for daughters, but not by your (old) covenant.

I will establish my covenant with thee; and you shall know that I am the LORD:

That thou mayest remember, be confounded (ashamed), and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

This is incredible! Judah, Israel, Jerusalem, was worse than Sodom—that's what He's saying. And He says, When I bring them back in the resurrection, you are going to have a covenant made between Me and you whereby I will forgive your sins, I will purge you, and I will use you to help rescue those who were not even as bad as you.

Remember the prophecy in Jeremiah 31:31: The days come, saith the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not like the old covenant. I will forgive their iniquity. I will teach them. I will write the Law of God in their hearts. —What an amazing opportunity! See how this ties in directly to the Second Advent of our Lord. We turn to the New Testament to the Book of Acts.

We go to a time and a passage where the Apostle Peter is addressing a crowd shortly after the Day of Pentecost. It's not the Pentecostal sermon itself. It's after that.

In Acts, the 3rd chapter, verse 1, we read: Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. —The ninth hour was the hour wherein the priest had to go in and trim the wicks on the candlestick. It was mid-afternoon, about 3 o'clock. Because that was the hour they went in, between the two evenings, it was customary for Israel to observe this as a time of prayer. That's why the disciples were going up to the temple to pray.

As they went up (verse 2): A certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for money. —The beggars were sitting there.

Peter looks at him. (This is a famous text. You remember it.) He looks at him. He fastens his eyes on him, and he says, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, I give unto you: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise and walk. —And he did! All the people saw this, and they were amazed. It created a stir everywhere.

This allowed such a crowd to gather that Peter was able to address them and tell them what they had done in crucifying their Messiah, and that it was the power of that crucified Messiah, now risen and in the heavens that was behind this healing, and they should repent for their sins, and they should turn in obedience, and they should become followers of the Master they had slain.

We now get over to verse 19. He says, Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

In verse 21, we read about Jesus: Whom the heaven must receive (retain) until the times of restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets.

Peter is urging the people to repent and receive their Messiah. But he affirms to them that, while they had seen him for 3- 1/2 years, they won't see him now. He has gone into the heavens, he has ascended, and he will be retained there until (what all the Jews knew was going to happen some day) the times of restoration of all things.

These Jews who heard Peter say this, what did they think in their minds? They thought about the testimony of the prophet that told them that some day God would make Israel His established kingdom. That was what was in the back of their minds. They knew they were children of Abraham. They had the national hopes that some day they would be God's kingdom. As a nation, they took a bad step, and for two thousand years they've been in punishment for it. But the prophets say they'll be regathered from that. They are today. We'll look at time prophecies about that later. They've been regathered. It's at the time of Christ's Return that he will establish, through them, his kingdom.

Let's look back to the first chapter of Acts, to see where Peter got this idea. See where they are just about to depart from Jesus as he ascends.

Verse 2: Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the holy spirit had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

We talked about the Harvest, in John, Chapter 4. Jesus said, Look, the fields are ripe, ready to harvest.

Now that Christ had died, they ought to go out and gather in as much of that ripe Jewish wheat as they can, and welcome it into the Christian garner. —You will have scarcely time to go over the cities of Israel and do the Job right before judgment will fall on this old system. —In this case, that is what he meant by Till the Lord come.

That is not the same as the Second Advent. It is referring to the Lord coming in judgment on the nation of Israel. That language applied to that judgment then. It also applies to our day. If we understand how it applied then, we can better understand how the prophecy applies now.

One other passage concerning this is of interest. It's Matthew 16:28. I'm sure this was very perplexing to the disciples. —Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here (these are Jesus' words to them), which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. —That can now be understood to apply to the judgment upon the Jewish system. Judaism collapsed.

What happened to Christianity? It flourished. In that sense, the spiritual kingdom of Christ began. There were some standing with Jesus who would not taste of death until that came. That came about 39 or 40 years later, upon the Jewish system.

There's another way of explaining this, also. Chapter 17 tells about the Mount of Transfiguration. That Mount of Transfiguration was a picture of Christ's coming Kingdom. That, too, is a very good way to apply Jesus' words (Matthew 16:28). The people standing there at the scene probably didn't get that point. The Transfiguration didn't happen for some days later. The people standing there understood Jesus to mean that some of them would not die until his kingdom would come in some sense. They would relate to the judgment falling on Judaism and the kingdom of Christ beginning to expand (even though spiritually, incipiently) on the earth.

What we've tried to show is that Matthew 24 does have two meanings to it. First, we are going to look carefully at the meaning that closed out the Jewish Age. Until we understand that, the language is so confusing that we won't understand the principles to apply in our day and the end of our age.

Matthew 24 has its predicate back in Matthew 23. Jesus has lambasted the Scribes and Pharisees. He has pronounced on them seven stinging woes. He has reserved the harshest language against them for this time. He knows his hour is at hand, his time is up.

There's no reason now for refraining from these judgment messages which are due, and to wake up the people around them. They must not trust the leadership of the Pharisees, who are going to put him to death.

Jesus gives them stinging woes, and finally says (verse 35): Upon you will come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. — Judgment is coming! Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, like a hen gathereth her chickens under wings, but ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Those were the words ringing in the ears of the disciples as they passed out of the temple at this time.

Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples who are listening to this. You don't know what's going on. You don't even know that Jesus is going to die. They were told, but they were too confused. Even after he died, they were still bewildered. They don't know he's going to go away and then come back again.

But they have these words ringing in their ears, You will not see me until you say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. —That sounds as though he's going to come!

With that, and their confused state of mind, as they pass out through the temple, and they see all these beautiful buildings, they can't imagine that Jesus could really mean that all this is going to be destroyed. As Jesus went out, departing from the temple, his disciples came to him and showed him all these buildings of the temple. Then he said something that wasn't very reassuring.

He said (Matthew 24:2), See all these things? Verily I say, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. —Perplexity upon perplexity.

They passed through the Kidron Valley, and walked up the western slope of the Mount of Olives, and paused there to rest. They're still thinking about Jesus' words.

Verse 3: As he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came privately and said, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming (parousia), and of the end of the world?' When you come, how will people know?

You've talked about your coming, but we're really confused. Explain what you are saying.

He begins to explain to them the things that are going to lead up to the destruction of the Jewish era. In doing this, he is also answering a question they do not yet understand fully. He's answering something much deeper than they could grasp then. He's going to include in his answer, while telling of things pertaining to the end of the Jewish era, things pertaining to the end of the Christian era and the Second Advent of Christ in our day.

They didn't grasp his point right away. Afterwards, the holy spirit illuminated their minds and they saw things more easily.

First, let's look at his answer as it applies to the Jewish era. Matthew 24:4: Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no man deceive you. Many shall come in my name, saying, I'm Christ—I am the Anointed ; and shall deceive many.

'There will be wars and rumors of wars. Don't be troubled. All these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nations shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: there'll be famines, pestilences, earth. All these are the beginning of sorrows. They will deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. Many shall be offended, shall betray one another, shall hate one another. False prophets will arise, and will deceive many.

'Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved.'

Even this is not the end. Jesus was just saying that all these things were going to transpire. It would be a hard time.

Go back to Chapter 23. He said he was going to send prophets and servants and ministers, and they would be persecuted and slain. That's what he was talking about. Verse 35: So that you (Jews) can

bring upon you all the righteous blood from Abel to Zacharias. — He's talking about the persecutions that will come before the destruction of Judaism—before the destruction of 70 A.D.

In a parallel way, this also applies to all the persecutions for 2000 years that come before the end of our age. We will return to that later. Now, we're just following Jesus' trend of thought as it applies to the end of the Jewish Age.

Mt 24:14 —This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and THEN SHALL THE END COME.

You know that after this was spoken, the disciples were very vigorous in their efforts to Christianize as much as they could and to proliferate the ministry of Christ and their great commission.

After they received the holy spirit in Jerusalem, they ministered in Jerusalem, then in Judea. The Book of Acts unfolds their work in just this way: It recounts their episodes in Jerusalem, then in Judea, and then over in Samaria—wasn't it Philip who had to go to minister to Samaria? and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Remember that episode when the Ethiopian eunuch (apparently a Jewish convert) received the Christian message.

After that, the Book of Acts introduces another apostle—one who had not had first hand acquaintance with Jesus. That was the Apostle Paul.

There, in Jerusalem, Paul said, Lord, they're not going to listen to me here. They know I persecuted your church. I've turned now, but they're not going to listen to me. —But the angel of the Lord appeared to Paul in the temples and said, I'm going to send you far hence, to the Gentiles. You will be my vessel to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles.

That is what happened. In the course of the years succeeding, Paul was used to bring the Gospel to much of the world of his day.

God had provided, before the Gospel unfolded, that the Roman Empire was stable and tranquil. The roads were generally free from thieves. There was comparative ease of transport. There was a common language. Paul was able to spread himself over the Roman Empire, and proselytize everywhere. He had a warm

following that supported him—Timothy, Luke, Titus, and many other co-workers. It was too great a work for one man.

The gospel was preached in all those Gentile lands before the end came. Paul died before Jerusalem was destroyed. He finished his ministry before Jerusalem came to a close.

Now look at the next verse (15): When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. When you see these things happening, leave, leave, leave. Don't waste any time in getting out.

When Jesus says, When you see the abomination stand in the holy place, what is he talking about? In order to get the language clearer, we have to go over to the Gospel of Luke. Luke's narrative helps us understand. Luke phrases it differently. It's the same episode, but Luke gives us the meaning behind what Jesus is saying. —

Matthew was the first gospel written. I think, contrary to some scholarly opinion today, that Mark was second. Today, in some circles, it is popular to say that Mark was first. Luke definitely followed later. He had Matthew and Mark's gospels in front of him as he composed his gospel. Luke helps to clarify the message to the Gentiles to whom he is writing. (Luke was a Gentile, of course.)

Luke, Chapter 21, verse 20: When you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. —That's a whole lot easier to understand. When the Roman armies come and encircle Jerusalem, leave, get out, rescue your life. That's what Luke continues to say.

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; let them which are in the midst depart out of it; let not them that are in the countries nearby enter into. For these be the days of vengeance, and all things which are written may be fulfilled.

He's talking about the impending destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Now that we have the idea more clearly, we go back to pick up the narrative in Matthew 24. Verse 19: Woe to them with child, and to those that give suck in those days! —If you have little children in your care, and you're trying to flee from this impending catastrophe, it's not going to be easy. That was very literally true. It wasn't easy.

Pray that your flight be not in the winter. —It's hard to travel then. —Nor on the sabbath day, when the gates are closed and you're only allowed to go a sabbath day's journey. Hope it doesn't happen then, because when this thing comes you have to leave quickly, get out of there, for your own sake.

In verse 21, we have this expression: For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

We must stop there. The next part goes on to something else. What is he telling them here? For the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened. —That word shortened in the Greek doesn't really mean shortened. —It's O.K., but it really means cut off. —It doesn't mean to abbreviate, as you might take a long word and abbreviate it. This word means to cut off. How did that work in the end of the Jewish era?

The Roman armies came, people had to flee. This had to be cut short, or no flesh would be spared. The elect were saved.

This is recorded in great detail in this book, The Complete Works of Josephus. Josephus was a Jew. He was in Palestine at the time. He was involved in the wars of the Romans against Judaism. He was captured by the Romans. He tried to implore on behalf of the Jews, so they wouldn't be slaughtered. He wanted them to give up. Later, he wrote a complete history of these episodes. The leader who came to fight against Jerusalem was named Vespasian. He later became the emperor of Rome. At this time, he was still a general. He took all his forces and circled the city of Jerusalem. How could anyone get out of the city? Jesus had said the people should flee the city before this happened. Now that the circle is complete, the Jews are trapped.

Vespasian heard the news about Nero, the Roman emperor, dying back in Rome. Vespasian knew he was one of the next ones in line. He broke the siege, returning to Rome. This was in 68 A.D. The

war had started in 66. The Jews had been victorious for a while, but eventually the Romans took control. In 68, it looked hopeless.

Now Vespasian received the news of Nero's death, he went back to Rome. For one year, Jerusalem was not sieged. Those that were Christians remembered Jesus' words. They left. Those days were cut short, cut off, So the Christians could leave. Now there was flesh saved. For the elects' sake, those days were cut off.

The warning was, Flee or else. —The next year, 70 A.D., Vespasian sent Titus back to Jerusalem, a Roman general with a large army. They circled the city again, and cut off all flight, and then the end was near. The Romans breached the walls, captured the city, burned the temple, massacred the inhabitants, or took them into slavery. That was the fall of Jerusalem.

The Christians had the time to get out, if they would. What happened at the time of the siege was almost indescribably horrendous. What happened internally in Jerusalem was that there was fraternal warfare going on. There were zealots who formed roving bands, bursting into people's homes and, because of the famine caused by the siege (this is what Josephus describes) they would rush in, literally take the food from people's mouths, gorge themselves So they would have nourishment themselves.

Mothers were eating their children. There was never a time in Judaism that was as bad as at the time of that siege.

That's what Jesus meant when he said, Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time (for Israel), nor ever shall be again (for Israel). Except those days should be shortened, no flesh would be saved.

Verses 23- 26: Then (at the time of that siege; everyone would be looking for a deliverer at that time!) —if anyone says to you during that siege, 'Lo, here's the Messiah, here's the Anointed' ; don't believe it, don't believe it. There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, which shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.

I have told you before, if they say to you, 'Behold, he is in the desert' (there were some people in the desert during this time, saying that's where Messiah would appear to them—that's a matter of history); if they say, 'He's in the desert' (that was the Qumran community, where the Dead Sea scrolls were later found),

don't believe it. If they say, 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers,' don't believe it.

Why not? Because that's not the way the presence of Christ is to be manifested at that time of crucial crisis. The way the presence of Christ would be manifest would be broadcast—not here, or there, or over in the desert. It would be broadcast.

As the lightning (the astrape, the illumination) comes from one part of heaven and shines to the other, that's the way the presence of Christ will be manifested—in the judgment to befall.

Now, continue reading. Skip verse 28. Verse 28 is not in sequence. We can show that from Luke. Verse 29: Immediately after the tribulation of those days (of those days of that siege that was So terrible, the tribulation was So great) shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

What is all that saying? Turn to Isaiah, the 13th chapter, where we get something like this kind of language. Isaiah 13:6: Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.

This was a prophecy against the city of Babylon when it would be destroyed.

Isa 13:10: The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not cause her light to shine. I will punish the world for their iniquity.

Isa 13:13: I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts.

Isa 13:19: And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, nor dwelt in from generation to generation.

Do you see that language? The sun didn't really go black. The moon didn't really stop shining. The stars didn't really fall from the heaven. The earth wasn't really moved out of her place. This was the way prophets denoted the complete destruction of the polity they were describing. When Babylon was destroyed, that

was the way the prophet represented it symbolically. That was language to describe utter destruction.

Mt 24:29 is using similar language to tell of the time when Titus would finally breach the walls of Jerusalem, rush in with his army, massacre the people, burn the temple, and the whole thing would collapse.

Matthew 24 is talking about a two- part catastrophe. The tribulation of the siege of 70 A.D. was a nightmare. What followed that tribulation was even worse. It was a complete collapse of the city. The whole thing was over.

Mt 24:30: Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

As applied to the end of the Jewish era, that's like Matthew 10:23 —Till the Son of Man be come. —They didn't recognize him by seeing Jesus. Jesus didn't appear. He was now a spirit being, invisible to human sight. They didn't see him literally. They saw the power of the judgment upon that system, and they recognized that as the hand of the power of the Master they had crucified.

When Jesus had been on trial, he was asked, Are you the Messiah? —He said, Thou sayest. They adjured him by the living God, Tell us. —And he did. He said, Hereafter, you will see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of power—coming on the clouds of heaven. —He was talking about the fact that they would recognize the judgment of their system as the power of the Son of Man who had been standing before them. Their eyes might thus be opened.

Mt 24:31: He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. —When did he do that? When did he gather his elect? He gathered his elect during the siege, when his elect fled. It was not after the destruction. His elect would have died if they had waited for that. His elect fled from the siege when the siege was broken, or even before when they saw the armies approach. He gathered his elect, he cared for them, he nurtured them. The elect were spared during that experience. They were gathered up all during that period, fleeing when the siege was going on.

Mt 24:32 —Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things come, know that it is near, even at the doors.

When you see all these signs come to pass, know that it is near. — What is it ? Luke tells us what it is. Luke gives us the answer by phrasing it differently. Luke 21:31 —So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

The Kingdom of God is that which would then come. When Judaism fell, that's the time when the spiritual kingdom of Christ began to grow. That's the time when Judaism took the back seat, and Christianity took the fore seat, to grow and expand.

We have reviewed how these scriptures applied to the Jewish Age. Now we will turn to the Second Advent. We will go back through these scriptures. How do they apply today, at our end of the age, in our period of history?

When we read in these scriptures of Judea, we think of the Christian religious world today. The Jewish world in A.D. 70 would picture the Christian world today.

When Revelation gives us all its symbols about judgments, the seven last plagues, things like that, do we think it is talking about Borneo? Or China? Of course not. It is speaking of Christendom, the Christian world. Revelation is dealing with things that will come to pass among Christian people and those systems that have persecuted them. The whole world will be brought into the Kingdom ultimately, but those symbols are about Christianity and Christendom.

So is Matthew 24. Judea represents Christendom. Look at verse 4: Take heed. Let no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. There were, as the ages went on, many people who came and said, I am the anointed. —It was surprising. Each had his following. Each came to nought ultimately, because if it is not of God the house will collapse. But a lot of people came and were deceived.

You shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: do not be troubled: the end is not yet. Nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against

kingdom: there shall be famines, pestilences, earthquakes. These are all the beginning of sorrows.

They will deliver you up to be afflicted, and kill you: you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. Then shall many be offended, and betray one another, and hate one another. False prophets will arise, and deceive many.

I think of when the papacy rose and deceived many into thinking they were Christ. When the pope crowned Charlemagne, it began a thousand years' imitation of Christ. Papacy had power for a thousand years. Those who have claimed to be Christ's vicar on earth must be included in the false Christs which Matthew 24:24 prophesied would arise. Not only Christ's vicar but the institutions which have been spawned by papacy—Here is Christ? —Believe it not.

Mt 24:12 —Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and THEN SHALL THE END COME.

After the witnesses, the Scriptures, were in sackcloth for that period of time, they died briefly and then they were raised up when the Bible societies sprang up and put Bibles into the hands of millions, Bibles written in the vernacular of the people. There was a new surge and wave of the Christian ethic, the Christian message, the Christian hope pronounced throughout the world. This was a great witness to all the world, and it came before the end—before the end would really come.

Today, that witness has been given. All nations have heard it. All nations have not been converted, but it doesn't say that all nations would be converted.

What nation on the earth today is there which has not received the message of the Gospel through the Scriptures? All nations have received it. We're living in the End Times. We're living in the times when this condition has been satisfied.

When ye therefore see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.

This is a hard one. In the Jewish era, we said the abomination of desolation were the Roman armies. We're not going to see Roman armies now. Turn briefly to Daniel, who prophesied this the abomination standing in the holy place. —Da 11:31 is the place that specifically refers to this: Arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

This passage is the passage that begins the period of 1260 years (which began in 539 A.D.). Verse 31 is the beginning point. Daniel 11 and Daniel 12 are one prophecy. When we get to Daniel 12, it refers directly back to Daniel 11:31. Daniel 12:11 —From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate be set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

That's the same starting point as the 1260 days, a day for a year.

What is the taking away of the Daily Sacrifice, and the placing of the Abomination that Maketh Desolate? What is that describing?

Spiritually, what is the daily sacrifice ? What was it, in Judaism, that they sacrificed every day? They sacrificed a lamb in the morning, and they sacrificed a lamb in the evening—every day in the year, come what may. That was always constant.

What did that represent? Who was the Lamb of God? Jesus! Our Lord! That's what was represented by the daily sacrifice.

Remember when Jesus was crucified: He was put on the cross in the morning, and he expired in the afternoon, at 3 o'clock, between the two evenings, just when they killed the evening sacrifice. He was on the cross six hours, as though to atone for the 6000 years of man's sin and death.

Jesus fulfilled the morning and the evening sacrifice. He was the ransom.

Who did away with the ransom? Who did away with that once for all sacrifice that never needs to be repeated? Who insisted that that sacrifice wasn't good enough? Of course, no Christian in his right mind would say that the sacrifice of Christ wasn't good enough. But somebody did. There was a doctrine that was prolifically held during the days of the papal administration, and it said, It wasn't good enough. If you have sins, we have to sacrifice Christ afresh

for you for that sin. —That is the Mass. It probably isn't as much understood as it should be. This is what the Catholic doctrine is all about. The Mass is not just a reminder of the death of Christ. How nice it would be if it were just a reminder. Instead, the Mass says that the bread is actually turned into the body of Christ, and that the wine is (not symbolically but) actually turned into the blood of Christ.

If you have never heard this before, you may think I have misunderstood this matter. No. That is the official doctrine. You have to sacrifice Christ afresh every time you observe the Mass. What an abominable thing! The once for all sacrifice of Jesus wasn't good enough? That's what they dictated. That's what they said.

When did that doctrine emerge? We suggest it was established with papacy's rule. It was in duration all this time.

If you understood what was going on, flee! Get out!

Finally, now at the end of the age, we can see how all these prophecies were fulfilled, and how abominable that was. When we see this, we must leave that system. Get out. Leave any system that would repudiate the once and for all sacrifice and merit of our Christ's death, his great sacrifice.

Verse 17: Let not him who is on the housetop come down and take anything out of the house. Don't go back into the old system and try to rescue something from it. —Neither let him which is in the field turn back to take his clothes. —Leave that. Go for the righteousness of Christ. That's the clothing we want. —If you have a child—if you have people you're trying to nourish, caught up in this, of course it will be hard to leave. But do it. Just leave. Get out. The old system is due for collapse. It's not going to maintain.

Verse 21: Then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be. —Whenever a prophecy has an application to an immediate context, as it did to the end of the Jewish era, it's much more precise and crisp in its fulfillment. In its longer- range meaning, it's more important, more significant, but not always as crisp. (You can see that in a variety of cases, even the prophecy of the virgin birth, as an example.)

Here, remember the destruction of Judea was in two parts: There was the siege first, and later the collapse. It was all part of the end.

We're in the end today. Do we see the impending doom coming? We do. We have seen the traditional forms of birth pangs starting—World War I, World War II, the breakdown of national structure since that time, the Communist revolution in 1917 that shook the world for 70 years, the upheavals of depressions. There have been all kinds of things that have been forcing the old system, this old world, this old Christian structure on the verge of collapse.

It hasn't collapsed yet. Why not? We're in the siege. We see it's imminent. We see it's coming, but it hasn't collapsed because it's being held back.

Revelation 7 said, Hold back the four winds until the saints of God are sealed in their foreheads. —When that work is complete, let it go.

Jesus said, For the elect's sake, those days will be cut short, cut off; the siege will be lifted. They'll be able to make their way through before the destruction comes. They'll be able to escape all the influences of the old system and of her daughter systems—leave that and flee.

Where are they supposed to flee? Jesus told them where to go. He said (verse 16), Let them which are in Judea, flee to the mountains.

There's a very precious text in Psalms 125\$ that is the key to what Jesus is saying. Psalms 125\$ speaks about the mountains around Jerusalem. Psalms 125:2: As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, So the LORD is found about his people from henceforth even for ever. —We're to flee to the LORD, to His truth, to His righteousness, to His covering. We're to leave any system of churchianity or nominalism that shares the spirit of Antichrist, the spirit of that great system or any of her daughter systems. We're to flee to the Scriptures, to study, to anoint our eyes with eye salve as he says in Revelation. That's our privilege now. That's how we flee this system that is tottering on the brink.

Mt 24:23 —Then if any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or, there'; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, which shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive even the elect.

Behold, I have told you before. If they say, 'He's here in the desert; or he's in the secret chambers'; don't believe it. For as the bright shining comes out of the east, and shines even to the west, that's the way the presence of the Son of Man will be felt.

Did the Jews in their day feel the judgment of the Son of Man? They did. Do we feel the judgments of the Son of Man abroad today? We see them evident in the earth. The collapse has not yet come. The collapse is still pending. It's still being held back.

In verse 29: Immediately after that—immediately after the tribulation of those days immediately after this prolonged Time of Trouble, and birth pangs, and difficulties and wars after that comes the worst of all. Then comes the complete collapse of this old system, to inaugurate the Kingdom of Christ.

Then, then, we now can trace the power of the Son of Man in the affairs of earth today. We can see Israel coming back to their land, and recognize that as an evidence of the authority of the Messiah.

But the world does not. What is going to awaken the eyes of the world to what is transpiring? Only the collapse will awaken the world to the things we see now.

Verse 30: Then shall appear (the evidence) the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The Jews saw that. They recognized that this judgment was from their Messiah. And now the world will recognize, when they're awakened with the Battle of Armageddon. God is intervening, and setting up something different.

Notice what happens next. Verse 31: And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. — That's the whole process that we're undergoing now. The elect are being gathered out of that old system so that they can be garnered into the heavenly garner beyond, to be with our Lord forever.

Then it says, in the next verse: Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; So likewise, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. — What is it? We learned already what it is. It is the glorious Kingdom of Christ that we read about in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 which will be the hope, the panacea, for which the whole world has been longing.

They've been longing for this Golden Age. They don't know what it is, what's coming. They just want, Something better, please.

That's when the Kingdom of Christ will finally break upon them.

Remember the Prophet Elijah. He was taken in spirit to Mount Horeb, and he was given a vision by God, of all these things that would come to pass. There was the wind, picturing the winds of war that we see in our day; there was the earthquake which rent the rocks, maybe picturing the great revolution that started with the Bolsheviks in '17. There was the fire, representing the anarchy which will finally wipe away the vestige of this old order. The Lord wasn't in any of that. That's where judgment was felt and seen and discerned. After that, Elijah heard a still, small voice speaking peace.

What a blessing, when the world wakes up after the ravages of this old order, and hears that still, small voice crying Peace from Israel, saying, There is a God. There is a Savior. There is a Kingdom. There is life in believing in the Savior.

When that message goes out to all the world, through the agency of Christ and his Bride in their spiritual glory, that Kingdom will dawn on this world as the final great hope for which man has been waiting.

Let's read what Paul says about that hope. He talks about this thing that all mankind is aching for, looking for—ignorantly, because they don't have any cogent, specified concept of what's coming.

Ro 8:16: The spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (now): And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint- heirs with Christ; if we suffer, that we may be glorified together with him.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

For the earnest expectation of the (and the King James is faulty here; it says 'creature,' but it's clearer in New American Standard, and your better versions) creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. —I think Phillips' translation says something like, They're standing on tiptoe—waiting, waiting, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God in glory. Because then

Verse 21: Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. Not only they, but we ourselves, which have the firstfruits of the spirit, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption the redemption of our body—so that we're with him in Christ in glory, and then IT can come—the blessed Kingdom of Christ, the reason all men are on tiptoes, waiting. They don't know what they're waiting for, but they're looking for something better to come.

What a prospect! What a glorious plan! What a blessed privilege to be the first fruits, the avant garde, to see what the world cannot see in the trouble that is coming to pass. We see the manifestation of God's power. The world must wait to see that later. We see what it's portending. It is the still, small voice of the Kingdom, soon to come, on the fragments of all the ruins of this old order.

DAY 5—PROPHECIES OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

DICK KINDIG: Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar, Day 5, Prophecies of Today and Tomorrow. —In last night's presentation, David Rice looked at the purpose of the return of Christ. He established that scripturally there were two main purposes. First, Christ returns to receive his Bride, the Church. That's what Christians have been waiting for and praying for for 2000 years—for their personal deliverance. —The second purpose of the return of Christ is to establish his Millennial Kingdom. That's what David has been examining in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation—the stone of Daniel 2, for example, and the promise in Daniel 7 that all people would serve Him, the promise of our Lord that he would enlighten every man that comes into the world, and when he was lifted up on the cross he would draw all men unto him.

These are promises we can receive and rejoice in because they are clearly written in God's Word. Even though we are not Universalists and we don't expect that all men will ultimately be saved, we recognize that there is a difference between ultimately being saved and having a full opportunity for salvation through a clear expression of the Gospel of Christ.

Now as we look at prophecies of today and tomorrow, we start to get a picture of how all of these prophecies are focusing on the

transition in world events, a preparation of the earth for this full explanation of the Gospel to the entire world of mankind, and the general resurrection. That is tonight's subject.

DAVID RICE: Thank you, and thank you for the prayer. I noticed that the prayer reminded us to check everything that we hear. That is always very much a part of Christian responsibility when you hear people speak about the Word of God. As Paul said about the Bereans that they received it with all readiness of mind, and then they proved—they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things be so. If you don't do that, then if you hear something that you don't test and prove, it will never become deeply ingrained in you as part of your character and your faith—even if it's true. If you examine it and find a flaw, then you will want to reject it, or look for some better harmony, or look for some correction. It's always important to be of critical mind when you hear things about the Word of God.

Many Christians will agree that the return of Christ is for the purpose of his claiming his Bride. The other reason for his return, to set up his Millennial Kingdom, has not engaged the attention of Christians to the same degree. That's natural, because Christian people are waiting for the time they will be with the Lord. It's reasonable that they should think about that feature primarily.

Largely, the Christian world has, to their disadvantage, neglected the fact which is so evident, that God has in mind something very wonderful for all of his human creation, after he has taken the elect Bride of Christ for his Son, bringing them to glory.

Remember the stone of Daniel 2:34,35 grew to fill the whole earth, on the ruins of the established kingdoms of this day. When they are broken apart, the Kingdom of God will flourish and grow here on earth. Then all people shall serve him (Daniel 7:27). He will enlighten every man that cometh into the world. He will draw all men unto him. All the dead shall rise from their tombs. Satan will be in the bottomless pit. Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The church will be as kings and as priests to bless the world of mankind.

Israel, now being regathered, is not just a flash in the pan, not just a sign to be destroyed or perverted. Israel being regathered to their land is to provide the nucleus of God's kingdom on earth. They have no faith in the Messiah. Many of them have faith, but very few of them have faith in Jesus as Messiah.

God is going to arrange that their faith will be reinstated. Then they will be used as the nucleus of God's Kingdom.

Matthew 24 applies both to the end of the Jewish era and the end of the Christian era. I think that is an essential point to recognize in order to understand how it applies to the end of the Christian era, our particular interest. I personally have had good teachers who helped me greatly with Matthew 24; but it never became as precise to me as I understood how those scriptures applied to the end of the Jewish era. I could use that as an example, a type, a setting, to see how that language fits the second application, which affects us most.

The prophecy speaks of many troubles before the end, but then comes the end—the parousia. The parousia is not merely a moment of time, but it is a period of time. That's a crucial point to understanding how this old age ends. This age does not end in a moment, in a flash, in an instant. This age ends with the Harvest of the age, as the Jewish era ended with the Harvest of the Jewish age. It ends with a period of time, during which various prophetic things are accomplished.

We have seen some of the prophecies pointing forward to our day. Now we will look at some of the prophecies speaking of our day directly. We will see how God, through Christ, has been fulfilling His plans step by step during this period. It has been the fulfillment of time prophecy.

There will be a climax, of course. 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8 says: The Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance. — Matthew 24 also referred to that, toward the end of the chapter.

We recognize the hand of Christ in earth's affairs now. The world will not recognize it until it is revealed by judgments later. That's pretty much the way it was at the end of the Jewish era, as well. The elect knew what was going on, they knew what was going to happen; they were waiting, they were expecting. The world had no idea, until finally they were awakened by the judgments that were so pervasive.

It has been necessary to delve into the past as a precursor for the present. We have to think about what the return of Christ entails before we can study the 1335 days, as an example. We have to consider all the prophetic time points and what they are anticipating, the establishment of the Kingdom on earth. We have

to understand from Matthew 24 that there's a time involved, punctuated with prophetic fulfillments—not just the climax.

There are some threads that are still dangling. Let us treat those issues, to complete the circle, before we go on in this study.

Mt 24:28 is a scripture that we passed by in our haste to discuss other points. It does not seem to be in sequence with the verses surrounding it. It sounds suspicious to decide that some of the Bible is out of order. But we know how the Gospel accounts were assembled: Matthew was the first gospel written. Some scholars don't agree with this, but I agree with the compilers of the Bible, who were following Christian tradition.

Certainly, Luke came later. Luke tells us that he's going to narrate things in sequence. King James uses the words in order. —Luke was very careful to write the narrative in sequence. One reason for that was that Luke realized that the earlier gospels had not done this. It was just a different approach—not a mistake, not an error.

Matthew has a topical approach to his gospel. For instance, the Sermon on the Mount is so long in the gospel of Matthew— chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8. When Matthew's writing on one theme, he includes episodes and words and thoughts that apply to that, even if they may have been spoken on other occasions. He blends them together. You can tell that this is true if you compare Matthew and Mark. Check the order of their narratives. They are very close, but Mark came later. Mark abbreviated, clarified, and re- ordered some of the narratives.

How did Mark have the audacity to re- order the narratives of Matthew the Apostle? Mark wasn't an apostle. It was because Mark had somebody at his side. Mark had the Apostle Peter. Mark was the amanuensis, the writer for Peter. Early Christian history tells us this. Mark was Peter's associate. Therefore, it was Peter who, recognizing how Matthew had combined different things together, clarified a few points. He re- sequenced some events more exactly. Mark is usually more clear in events than Matthew.

By the time Luke wrote, he decided to write very precisely sequentially.

We have the Lord's Great Prophecy in three Gospels. John doesn't record it. It's in Mark, chapter 13, one brief chapter. It's in Luke, chapter 21. Matthew includes some things which Mark does not. If you take the blocks that Matthew records which Luke does not

record, you will see that Luke records them on other occasions. Mark records what Jesus actually said on that occasion. Luke 21 records what Jesus said on that occasion. Luke 17 and Luke 12 record things on other occasions that Matthew has grouped together because they are discussing the same subject. That's what Matthew does: he groups topically.

In this particular case, in verse 28, Matthew has put it into a spot where he thinks it makes sense topically. Let us turn to Luke 17:34- 37, and see how Luke tells us precisely the sequence of thought. —I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; one shall be taken, the other left. Two shall be grinding; one taken, the other left. Two shall be in the field; the one taken, the other left. —(Some of this is spurious in the Luke account, but it's elsewhere, So I'm just going to use Luke as it is in the King James.)

Where? Where are they taken? Our Lord often spoke in mysterious language. He answered their question in a mysterious, cryptic way. Now he said, Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Is this good or bad? Where are they taken? The eagles seem to be gathered to the body for their nourishment. Think of the Jewish era perspective. Those who are the elect, rescued from that problem, will be taken to a body of nourishment, understanding truth, elucidation. The spiritual kingdom will begin to grow. This is something good, not bad. I make a point of this, because sometimes Christians think this is the Roman eagles on the carcass of Judaism. That is not the case.

Remember, in Revelation, how the woman went on two wings of a great eagle, to get nourishment. Throughout the age, God has been caring for the church on the wings of an eagle, flying for nourishment. In Isaiah, the 40th chapter, the elect mount up with wings as eagles, encouraged by the hand of the Lord.

Here, these eagles flying to the carcass, represent the elect being provided nourishment after they have been spared from this trouble. Today, this is a very special promise to the elect. The elect are encouraged to leave any affiliation that is not to their spiritual advantage. —Come out of her, my people. —This is all saying that, before the period of trouble and distress, before the final climax, there is the time when the four winds are still being held back So that the elect can be sealed. Where are the elect sealed during this time? It says they are being sealed in their forehead.

There is a heart sealing, of which we read elsewhere in the Bible. This, that we are discussing now, is the sealing in the forehead. It's talking about this period of time, this end of the age, and how there's an opportunity for Christian people to study, understand, receive the truth, come to the Lord, as never before in history. The facts are So much clearer—the study references of the last hundred years are So much more helpful. Many people during the Dark Ages didn't even have a Bible.

Today, we have advantages that others never had—Commentary, Concordance, Bible Dictionary. It fits what he said to the last church, I counsel thee to anoint thy eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see—see the beauties of the Divine Plan, the grandeur of God's character in it, in a way that in past ages has not been seen So crisply since the days of the apostles. Even in the days of the apostles, they could not know some things that we know today. That sounds rather audacious. How is there something Paul didn't know that we could know? There is. There are prophecies in Daniel we read, which good Christian people have brought out and examined over the centuries, but they were sealed until the time of the end. Remember, the angel told Daniel, You can't understand it. Nobody will. Just close up the book and seal it until the time of the end. Then, many will study and knowledge will be increased.

We have that privilege, but if we are not attentive to the prophecies we won't benefit from the privilege. That is part of the carcass of truth which we as eagles—mounting up with eagle wings, will find as nourishment. That's our privilege.

Lu 21:29 is another point we skipped before. This is part of the Lord's Great Prophecy. —And he spake to them a parable, 'Behold the fig tree and all the trees. When they shoot forth, you see and know of yourselves that summer is nigh at hand. —In the Jewish climate, they just had two seasons—winter and summer, not spring, not autumn. —When you see that, you know that winter is over, summer is nigh.

'Likewise ye, when you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.' We see all these beginning to be fulfilled because we're at that period of the end of the age when prophecies are coming to a focus. Therefore, we know that it—the Kingdom of God—is nigh at hand.

The illustration that Jesus gave has a real point to our end of the age. —'See the fig tree blossom.' Jesus did not choose the fig tree

by coincidence or incidentally. Remember, the fig tree was what Jesus cursed on his way into Jerusalem one of those last days. The next day, they passed by and saw that it had withered overnight, and they were surprised. Jesus made a point of that. The lesson was that Israel, which he was ready to cast off, had no fruit. There were plenty of leaves of profession, but not enough fruit had developed. Jesus cursed them. The fig tree represented the nation of Israel.

It was going to be cursed for 2000 years. —When you see the fig tree sprout again, you'll know that's a sign of the Kingdom soon at hand. —

Have you seen the fig tree sprout again? Have you seen Israel put out leaves again? —What a wonderful indication to us of how close we are.

Lu 21:29 says, When you see the fig tree, and all the trees. —If the fig tree represents Israel, what do you suppose all the trees are? Other nations. About the time Israel received its statehood in 1948, after World War II, between 1945- 1955, there was an explosion of independent countries in the world. That was because the old colonial powers began to fade, and the nations over which they had ruled began to sprout and blossom. That's another indication of how close we are to the promised Kingdom of God.

As we trace the prophecies, year by year, episode by episode, we see it coming closer and closer. We trace our path through the prophecies and see there is more yet to happen. We're in the period at the end of the age when these things are coming to pass.

Back in the book of Daniel, in the 12th chapter, we saw the last reference to the 1260 days. Daniel 12:7: A man clothed with linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half. —That's three and a half times, our old phrase which we've mentioned often. It's the same as 42 months in Revelation, same as 1260 days in Revelation. It all refers to a day for a year in prophecy. They refer to the 1260 years of papal dominion. There were 3- 1/2 years at the end that were pinned down in Revelation to show us we're on the right track. Daniel 12:9: Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and tried; ... from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away (that started all this—when Papacy set up the Mass) shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. —That takes us to 1829, which was about the time when the Adventist movement

began to really take an initiative. In the next fifteen years, it swelled to a large gathering in the churches.

Adventism wasn't its own church, you understand. Adventism at that time was not one church, one sect. That wasn't the case. There are groups today that call themselves by names in which there is the word Adventist. —We're not talking about them. We're talking about the movement of Adventism. 1829 is about the time when Adventism picked up steam. That's when the prophecies of Daniel were understood more or less accurately.

Da 12:12 —Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

If you add 1335 days to our base date of 539 A.D., you will produce the total of 1874. The date 1874 A.D. ends the sixth church, and begins the last church in our day. That was the last prophetic marker to which Daniel points. He had spoken of a sequence of three prophetic periods.

We observe the signs of the prophecies of Matthew 24, and the signs of the times in our day. We have learned that the end of the age is a period of time. When does that period of time commence prophetically? It commences in 1874. That is the prophetic date that begins the focus of the fulfillment of prophecy in our day. That date will come up again. That date marks something of interest in the movement of the Lord's people, to see something better in God's plan than the Dark Ages had taught them to think.

In Daniel 12:12, we have only one clue of what is intended by the prophecy. It might sound easy that there is only one single clue, or maybe that sounds too few to be helpful. But it's all we have. The clue is one word, blessed. —It doesn't tell you what's going to happen—only that Blessed is he that waiteth and comes to the end of this period. —It doesn't tell you what's going to happen, only that these people are blessed.

When we talked about 1260 days, we were told what would happen. It said, The persecution of the saints would last that long, and end at that point. —Papacy's power to persecute did terminate at that point, 1799. The papacy was left without a head, and no successor was immediately elected to replace the pope. That was a strong, marked point in history. The intimation of that prophecy was that the wise began to understand about that time.

Here, there's only one point. The one point is blessed. —Blessed.

Lu 12:36,37,38 uses this word blessed. —And you yourselves be like men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately. —Note: comes and knocks.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he comes shall find watching: verily I say unto you, he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and serve them.

If he comes in the second watch, or the third watch, he shall find them. BLESSED are those servants. —The point is that this is speaking of the Lord's return. The Lord's saints were eagerly expecting the end of the age.

That's what those Adventists were doing. They were waiting for the Lord's return. They were waiting for the end of the age.

What they didn't grasp was that the end of the age is more than a moment. They thought it would be one moment in time. They didn't understand that it was a whole span of fulfillment of prophecy.

Is it possible, therefore, that the blessedness promised is the blessedness Jesus referred to as eating? When this time comes, at the end of the 1335 days, could the blessedness to the watchers refer to the meat in due season?

Let us turn to Revelation, the 3rd chapter, where it speaks of the church of Laodicea. These same matters are discussed here.

Revelation 3:18: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see. —There's the first hint about anointing, understanding, getting a fuller grasp of the truth.

Re 3:20: I stand at the door, and knock. —Isn't that what it says in Luke? When he knocks, we can hear the knock of prophecy. We can open to him. What did Luke say? —He will come in and sup with us, and we with him.

Of course, this isn't a literal dinner. It isn't a literal knock on the door. It isn't a literal hand on the door. It's symbolic. When you hear the knock of prophecy, be alert to it. Open it up. Examine it. We're in the time when Daniel said the wise would understand. —

They would begin to see all the rich things that prophecy has for us about the conclusion of the age. That's what Revelation says.

I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. —What a wonderful dinner! We are tasting it now. We're tasting it as our spiritual food, from scripture. It's the portion we have at the end of the age to tell us what's happening in God's plan.

Let us turn to Matthew the 13th chapter. Matthew 13 records a series of seven parables whereby our Lord instructs the disciples about things to come. These parables basically outline the whole Gospel Age in one series, from beginning to end.

There are seven churches in Revelation. There are seven parables here. There is a connection.

At the end, when all the parables have been given, in verse 51, Jesus asked, Have you understood all these things? —They said, Yea, Lord. —Of course, they didn't, really. They didn't grasp it all, but they got something from it.

Then he said to them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old. —That is our blessed privilege today. All through the age, Christians have been studying and learning things new, and appreciating old truths—but it has never before been as it is today. There have been fresh understandings. Luther had some. His finding was old—it was from the Apostle Paul—but it was fresh and new to Luther—Justification by Faith. There have been things through the age that have been learned and accumulated, and we have that same privilege today.

There is another area we should discuss—the nation of Israel. When we talk about the nation of Israel, we are going to consider some very specific time prophecies concerning the return of Israel to their land.

We're in the Jubilee year of the nation of Israel, but it took a long time to get this far. Somebody asked David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel, When did all this begin? Where do you begin dating the beginning of events? —He said, I look back to 1878. —That's not our 1874, but it's close. —1878 was the date,

he said, when the Jews first got the right to equal protection of the law in Palestine.

What's So special about that? It was special, because they'd never had it. They couldn't buy land. They might have inherited it from their ancestors and claimed it in that way, but they couldn't buy land. They didn't have equal protection under the law. The Ottoman Turkish Empire was in control of Palestine. It had had a strangle- hold on the land for 400 years. The land was pretty much waste.

There were some Jews there, they weren't prospering. Jews in the rest of the world had very little motivation to return to their homeland. Now, in 1878, there was a Congress of Nations declared because of the Russian- Turkish War of 1877. They had to decide how to divide the lands. As a result of this conference, a small provision of the treaty said, Henceforward, everyone will have equal treatment under the law.

It didn't specify the Jewish people, but it helped the Jews; because they hadn't had equal treatment under the law. That very year, the first colony (of those resettled in modern times) took root in Palestine. That was Petah Tikvah. From that time forward, the Jews have been growing and prospering (by fits and starts; it's never been smooth for them), and David Ben Gurion said, That's where I would date the modern return of Israel—from 1878 forward.

We will notice a focus on the 1870s, when the prophecies of the end of the age begin to take root.

Let us look at the Book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar the king had a dream.

We understand that Daniel 4 is one of those passages that has been studied by good Protestant expositors for a long time. As far as we know, the earliest account of anyone interpreting the passage that we have at hand, in the way we suggest, was a man named John Aquila Brown. He first published a book with a very long title. The first two words were The Eventide. —That referred to the close of the Christian era.

Mr. Brown was a student of prophecy, and he and his friends had been able to see something about these 1260 years closing during the French Revolution era. Many expositors, therefore, began to take note and be alert to other things that might be coming to pass.

Mr. Brown found this in Daniel, Chapter 4, and he says in his book that as far as he knew (and he had studied others) this was the first time these thoughts had appeared in print. That was 1823.

I wanted to see that book, and when I was in England I went to the library and tried to get it. But I was a visitor, and they would not allow me access to the stacks. So close, and yet So far. About two weeks ago, on the Internet, a good friend of mine said he was rummaging through some old materials he had, and he found this book and wondered if anyone was interested in it. Wow! I WAS! At ANY price! (I haven't gotten the copy yet. All I know is what other books write about it, but this is the approach he used.) This book is quite well known among prophetic students today.

Da 4:10: Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one (that's like an angel; that's the way they describe it) came down from heaven;

And cried aloud, and said, 'Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, with a band of iron and brass (around that stump) in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven.

Have you ever had a really strange dream, where things just change radically? That's what happening here in this dream. There is a tree that's cut down, and all of a sudden the dream morphs into a beast—or someone who's groveling like a beast.

Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men.

This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now, Belteshazzar (that was Daniel's Babylonian name), declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee. — (Make that the holy God, and Daniel and we would agree.)

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, 'Belteshazzar, don't let the dream, or the interpretation, trouble you. Whatever it is, just tell me.' Nebuchadnezzar could see that something was on Daniel's mind which made Daniel hesitant to speak. Remember, this was the king who was ready to throw people into a blazing fire for an offense. He'd done that in Chapter 3. You don't speak quickly, especially if it's something bad.

The king insisted, Be honest. Just tell me what it is.

Daniel began, with great humility, Oh, king, let this dream refer to your enemies, not to you. This is it: The tree that you saw, and which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit much, ...It is you, O king. You are grown and become strong: thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, 'Hew down the tree and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots in the earth, with a band of iron and brass; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, TILL SEVEN TIMES PASS OVER HIM;

This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. —You know the story. He was going to eat grass like an oxen until SEVEN TIMES would pass over him.

Whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure to thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

Finally, in verse 32: They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: and shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will.

The next verse goes on to show that it really came to pass. It really happened. Nebuchadnezzar literally, for seven times was like a beast in the field, and wandered out there insane. When he came to his own, at the end of that period, his kingdom was restored.

There's the prophecy. It really did happen. Daniel said it would. I'm sure it did. The expositor, John Aquila Brown, looked at it, as many have since then, and they said, Seven times pass over him. That sounds like the times of prophecy that Daniel talks about later.

What's the symbolism of Nebuchadnezzar being like a beast in the field? In Daniel 7, Daniel had his vision of the kingdoms that would come to rule this earth. There were a lion and a bear and a leopard and a great ten-horned beast. Those were the kingdoms of earth. They were like Nebuchadnezzar was going to become. He proposed that Nebuchadnezzar who, after all, was the head of gold in Chapter 2, the first of these kingdoms, representing all of the kingdoms to come; he was like the head, the chief.

God decided to make a picture of Nebuchadnezzar, about all the time these Gentile kingdoms were going to rule this old world. The kingdom of men is going to be perverted and made to serve like these beastly kingdoms, these four beastly governments, that would serve down through the age.

During this time, one of the kingdoms that was particularly afflicted was Israel. Israel was specifically punished by Nebuchadnezzar because of their infidelity to God. During all this time during which these four kingdoms—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome—took their turn to hold sway, Israel would be subordinated, dominated, in some way or another.

John Aquila Brown thought, I wonder if these beast-like governments will hold sway for seven times. —Seven times x 360 = 2520 years.

Is it possible that that span of time is prophetically intimated here to be the time during which God is going to allow these four world empires to rule the world? If so, that means Israel, who was subordinated to Babylon, won't really be fully free to grow again as a nation until the expiration of that period of rule by these governments.

This is not as explicit as the prophecies in Daniel 7 and Daniel 12. Those prophecies were undeniable. This prophecy is interpretive. It just seems that this must be a prophecy as well as those others. This is what John Aquila Brown proposed.

John Aquila Brown went back in history to see when the Babylonian Empire began and when it ended. When would all of these empires finally come to a climax? Bro. Brown lived in 1823, and the time he calculated was beyond his lifetime—not quite a hundred years.

Let's turn to Daniel, the 1st chapter. This is where I think he picked up a date to start this prophecy. Daniel 1:1: In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem, and besieged it. —John Aquila Brown said, I will look into history, and find when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem the first time.

He found the date, 604 B.C. He said, If I start with 604 B.C., and go forward 2520 years from there, I come to 1917 A.D. —Bro. Brown died, and never lived to see if this worked or didn't. Other Protestant expositors followed this lead. They changed the dates here a little bit, there a little bit, and figured we'll see what happens.

Do you know what happened in 1917? It's incredible! 1917 was during World War I. The Ottoman Empire was on the losing side of the war. The Ottoman Empire had always been an agent of England. Everyone expected that the Ottoman Empire would join with England in this war.

There's a book written about this, *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman. She writes a fascinating account of how World War I started. One of the shocking things to the British admiralty was that Turkey joined with Germany against England. That was a real shock to the English. They couldn't understand it.

Prophetically, that meant everything. Now, England was at war with the old Ottoman Empire, Turkey. It was Turkey that controlled Palestine. The war wasn't going well for England for a while. It didn't look good. France seemed to collapse basically. The war was against the Allies for quite a while.

Then something happened that turned the tide. There was a chemist in England, by the name of Chaim Weizmann. He developed a better form of gun powder. That discovery turned the tide of the battle. The government wanted to do something to reward him.

He said, For myself, I have everything I need. But my people need a homeland. —He was Jewish. It was by Providence that Chaim Weizmann, a Jew, was in the right place at the right time. The British government accede to his request. They issued, in 1917, what is known today as the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration says, Her Majesty's government views with favor the establishment of Palestine as a national homeland for the Jews. —England went on record saying, That's our policy. We're going to make Palestine a homeland for the Jews.

Why not? England was at war with the people who owned Palestine. They had no reason to favor them. They might as well return it to the people to whom they are now indebted.

That was a nice piece of paper. But England didn't have control of the Holy Land. It wasn't until about a month later when their General Allenby took the city of Jerusalem without a shot. General Allenby was a man of some faith. I don't know how deep his faith was, but it was enough that he came to Jerusalem, the Holy City, and found no apparent resistance. (Perhaps the defeated enemy considered it futile.)

He walked into the city—he didn't even ride—with reverence. Jerusalem was released. It seems like a stunning confirmation. 1917.

There is a question about the date of 604 B.C. It's on the border of 604 and 605. It's hard to pin down exactly. But it's certainly an interesting calculation—especially in light of the fact that this concept of the seven times that would come over the kingdom of Israel for so many years was predicted so far in advance because of Bro. Brown's studies of the prophecy of Daniel.

When we go back historically, we can flush this out better. We now have better facts, and records of what actually happened to fulfill it. We're going to look at this again with a little more precision.

You can trace this in world history. It's not difficult to trace. Before Babylon, there was another world empire. This is not recorded in the Book of Daniel, because that other empire didn't conquer Jerusalem. That was the Assyrian Empire.

Assyria almost conquered Jerusalem. In the days of Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria amassed his armies, surrounded Jerusalem, and took other cities. That night, after Hezekiah had prayed to God as Isaiah had directed him, God gave them a great deliverance. When the Israelites woke up in the morning, all they saw was dead men. The angel of the Lord had smitten 185,000 of the Assyrians and the residue went home in disgrace.

God saved His people with a miracle beyond anything they had ever experienced.

When I was in high school, I didn't care much for history, but this part of history excited me. I was looking at a map that shaded in portions of conquered lands. I saw the Assyrian Empire was huge, and yet there was a little circle in the middle which was not shaded. It was Jerusalem. God had saved it. It was not conquered.

But the Israelites continued to disobey, and God did not preserve them from the next empire that came along. As a matter of fact, He says, Nebuchadnezzar is my tool—my agent—for punishing you.

When the Assyrian Empire fell—Nineveh fell in about the year 612 B.C., but the Assyrian Empire regrouped in another city called Haran. Haran fell in the year 610 B.C. It fell before the Babylonians, and from that time forward, the Babylonians were in control. You can mark the experiences, year by year. In 609, there was another conflict in the same city. In 608, the Babylonians were off somewhere else conquering. We have the chronicles right from their records. We know exactly what they did, year by year the state records. They've been dug up, unearthed in modern days.

In 607, the Babylonian army first crossed the Euphrates River into the Holy Land. They took a city on the other side of the bank. The Euphrates River is the border, given in scripture, as the northern border of the Holy Land. In 606, the army continued, and conquered three more cities.

605 was a momentous year. The king of Egypt, the competitor for the rule of the Holy Land, came up and had a battle at a city called Carchemish. It's referred to in the Bible. It's referred to in Jeremiah 25:1 and also Jeremiah 46:1. It's specifically referred to as taking place in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

After that battle, the king of Babylon won so much that he pursued the Egyptian host all the way down to the city of Pelusium. (We read that in history, not in the Bible.) Then he heard news that his father, back home, had died. Nebuchadnezzar, in command of the army, raced back to claim the throne. (Hebrews wasn't yet king.)

The Jewish historian Josephus says that, at that time, Nebuchadnezzar commanded his officers to take the prisoners they had amalgamated—among whom were specifically Jewish prisoners back later while he himself raced across the desert to get the throne.

Who were those Jewish prisoners? That was when he besieged Jerusalem for the first time. By the Babylonian reckoning, that was the third year of Jehoiakim. (In Israel's reckoning, it was the fourth year; they had a little different system.)

The next year, Nebuchadnezzar returned to the Holy Land. He no longer had a competitor. He runs up and down through the land everywhere, and gathers all the tribute of the kings of the Holy Land.

In Daniel, the 2nd chapter, the next year (603 B.C.) is specifically mentioned. Daniel 2:1 —In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar he dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers. —This was the scene where he saw the vision of the world empire of four components that were going to come to rule—the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and things of brass, the legs of iron, the feet part of iron and part of clay.

In Daniel 2:37, Daniel said, I told you the dream. Here's the interpretation: Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. Thou art this head of gold. —In 603 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar was declared to be, by the prophet Daniel, the head of gold. That statue of Daniel, that empire, had taken control.

Nebuchadnezzar had accomplished this in a seven- year span, from 610- 603 B.C. In that span of time, he took control of the Holy Land.

With that in mind, we can advance down the stream of history 2520 years and see what actually unfolded.

2520 years beyond 610- 603 B.C. brings us to the dates 1911- 1918 A.D. That's pretty close to when Israel got legal permission to work toward the re- establishment of Palestine as a homeland for themselves—national independence. Can we get more precise with these exact dates?

You know what 1918 was; that was the end of World War I. 1917, Jerusalem was freed. 1918, World War I ended. Now, the war is over. England is in control of Palestine, thoroughly. England sends representatives to Palestine, as does the Jewish community, to begin formally working toward establishing them as an independent nation.

That can't happen overnight. Everybody knew that. There were a lot of fits and starts in between. It couldn't happen quickly, but they began to plan from that time forward. Thirty years elapsed before they got their nationhood back.

Would 1911 mean anything? I read an old book about the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Scanning down the list of events, I saw that they had not engaged in much warfare for forty years before that. Then, in the year 1911, the Ottoman Empire was attacked by Italy. Italy attacked Turkey's North African provinces.

In the next year, 1912, Greece and Turkey went to war—Greece against the Ottoman Empire. To the world's amazement, Greece actually won. 1913 was pretty dismal for Turkey, and they ceded away all their European holdings to the great powers. 1914 comes around, and Turkey picks the wrong side of the war to join. After 1914, it's all downhill. In 1918, the Ottoman Empire is in dust and ashes.

If you look up the history of Turkey, you'll find it written from about 1200- 1500, and then it started over in 1918. The empire was basically collapsed by 1918. It had to start all over again.

Palestine was freed in that seven- year period, 1911- 1918.

Now, the British and the Great Powers were playing a major role in Palestine. It was World War I that caused them to free Palestine. Technically, World War I started in 1914.

Looking back to 607 B.C., we saw that that was the first time that the Babylonian king actually crossed the Euphrates into the Holy Land. Now, not only is he encroaching on God's sovereign area, the Holy Land—he's going to punish the people. He's immediately getting into conflict with the other world power that lays claim to that area, the king of Egypt. Later, they had a battle to decide this. 607 was the time when the major armed powers came into conflict.

607 B.C. is 2520 years before the major world powers came into conflict in our century.

The four- volume history of World War I by Winston Churchill (who was part of the admiralty at that time—in the war office running the British navy) was republished recently in two volumes. It is entitled World Crisis, 1911- 1918.

Why did Churchill choose the beginning date of 1911? He goes back, in the book, and shows how World War I really started because of the residual problems of the Napoleonic wars. In Chapter 2, he brings it up- to- date from the Franco- Prussian war in the 1870s. Then he jumps, next, to 1911. The 3rd chapter of his book begins with 1911.

That was the date, Churchill said, when the major powers really came into a crisis. It was called the Agadir Crisis. The Germans sent a gunboat named the Panther into areas that weren't supposed to have German gunboats in them. Everybody thought they were ready to erupt in war. He said, The alarm bells were ringing, and all that filled my mind were preparations for war.

Eventually, that crisis resolved peaceably. But Churchill said that, from that time forward, there was nothing but increased armament preparations.

Finally, a little match in the Balkans lit the tinder in 1914, and the whole thing exploded.

Isn't it fascinating that the historical dates for the seven- year rise of the Babylonian Empire can be projected forward 2520 years, and then the Holy Land was freed because of a seven- year episode, 1911- 1918? That was what John Aquila Brown's date

was. Bro. Brown may not have had all the details, every date, precise, but he got the point from prophecy.

In Daniel, the 4th chapter, there were seven times prophesied. That appears four times. Four times it says that seven times would pass over this beastly Nebuchadnezzar.

What did God prophecy about Israel itself? Leviticus 26 was a prophecy given by Moses to Israel long before the Babylonian Empire was of any concern to them. God had said, through Moses, that Israel would be favored if they kept the Law.

Le 26:12 —I will walk among you, I will be your God, you shall be my people.

I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their bondmen; I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you to go upright.

But if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

If you shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, So that you will not do all my commandments,

I will do this unto you; I will appoint over you terror, consumption, consume the eyes, cause sorrow of heart: and He goes on and on.

Then He says, If you're not responsive to the chastisements I give, then finally I'm going to give you the whole punishment.

Le 26:18 —If you will not for all this hearken unto me, I will punish you seven times for your sins. —If you go through the chapter, you will find that He repeats this four times. He is going to punish Israel for their disobedience. You will find this in verses 18, 21, 24, and 28.

When will that happen? Is there anything in Leviticus 26 that tells us when that is going to happen? Will it happen when the Assyrians come against them? When the Greeks come against them?

Le 26:31 —I will make your cities waste, bring your sanctuaries unto desolation:

I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. I will bring the land into desolation: your enemies shall be astonished at it. I will scatter you among the heathen, draw out a sword after you: your land and your cities shall be laid waste.

Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbath, as long as it is desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; As long as it lies desolate it shall rest; because it didn't rest in your Sabbath, when it should have.

Who did that to Judah, to Jerusalem? Who caused them to move out of the land? Who destroyed their sanctuary? Babylon. Babylon was the country that destroyed their sanctuary the first time ever. We therefore know that we're at the time of the Babylonian Empire when this affliction is going to begin. We're right to focus on this time period. Daniel's prophecy was clear. These prophecies also began at the time of the Babylonian Empire. It is a double testimony.

Even Jesus said, According to the Law, you should establish everything by two or three witnesses. —Jesus said, My Father testifies of me, and I testify of myself. —Two witnesses are adequate. That's what Jesus said to the people who didn't believe him.

Here we have two witnesses from Scripture on this issue. We have Daniel 4, and we have Leviticus 26. This is about Israel being punished. It's the other side of the coin. In Daniel, we have the time when beastly governments are going to have control, like beasts ranging the earth. In Leviticus, we have the time when Israel is going to be subordinated to them. It's the same thought from the other side of the coin.

Look at Leviticus 26:19. In Daniel 7, the vision showed the beastly governments. In Daniel 2, the governments were represented by the image of metal. The image of metal had various components to it. The strongest metals were the brass and the iron. Notice verse 19—I will break the pride of your power; and make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: —It's as though God is referring to the time when the Gentile governments represented by the iron and brass will have sway over the Israelites.

We believe this, but we're not the first to have seen it. There have been a number of expositors, from way back, who talked about this. Now that we have lived farther in this time period—into times beyond 1918—we wonder if there is more to this parallel that we can see in retrospect.

When Israel was subordinated to Babylon, they did not immediately have their temple destroyed nor were they immediately cast out of the land. As a matter of fact, God told them (through Jeremiah), If you will submit, I won't even take you out of your land. You will be punished. Babylon is going to rule for seventy years, and you will be under them. But you won't be driven out, your sanctuary won't be destroyed, you will be spared a lot of grief. —

They wouldn't listen. They continued to disobey, even after Nebuchadnezzar first took over Jerusalem. So God said, I'm going to give you another punishment. —Later on, in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh and eighth year (you'll find the record of this in II Kings 24:12), there was another captivity.

You can easily check this by secular records. The year was 597 B.C. What would that point to, 2520 years later? That would be 1924 A.D. Nothing special comes to mind about that year, but we'll think about it.

Some years later, the last king of Israel, Zedekiah, was on the throne. God overthrew him. That siege lasted three years—589, 588, and 587 B.C. Finally, Israel collapsed, in 587. Those dates would point (2520 years later) to 1932, 1933, and 1934. That wasn't all. There were some Jews who had fled to Egypt for safety, although God had said, Don't flee. —There was a residue of Jews left in the land, and God (through Jeremiah) said, Stay there. I will protect you. Don't leave. —They heard the words, and left their land.

They went to Egypt, and Jeremiah said, If you go to Egypt, God will send Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt to get you. You do not listen to my instructions. —In Jeremiah, the 52nd chapter, it tells that later on, five years after this, Nebuchadnezzar came back and went to Egypt (it doesn't say Egypt, but that is apparently where it took place). In the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 52:30), he came back again, and that would be the year 582 B.C. That would signal the year 1939 A.D.

What did happen to Israel after World War I, before they ever became a nation? In Germany, there was the Holocaust—6,000,000 Jews and 6,000,000 others were killed. It was a terrible circumstance. But it did cause the Jews, as nothing else had done, to require the Jews to insist upon their own nation. The countries

of the world acceded to the Jews' demand for help, and in 1948 the Jews had their nation back again.

But it had been a step- by- step process covering many years of turmoil and persecution through the Nazi- Hitler era that allowed them to get back their nationhood again. England had renigged on their promise. In deference to Arab power, England was skittish about giving Israel its independence. It wasn't until the Nazi persecution forced their hand and they had to act; then they really got their statehood back.

These dates outline exactly the persecution of the Nazis against the Jews. 1924 was the year when Hitler produced his manifesto declaring what he was going to do if he could get the power to do it. In 1932, the Nazis became the largest minority party in the German government. No party had the majority, but the Nazis were the largest party. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. In 1934, von Hindenburg died, and Hitler became the president and unchallenged leader of Germany.

He began the persecution of the Jews promptly.

1939, World War II broke out, which finally led to Israel's release.

There's one more date in this sequence. For this, we have to turn to the Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 40 is a very special vision that was given to him about the return of his people Israel to their land. It was a vision about a restored temple. The temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This was a vision about restoring the temple to Israel. It was figurative, but it was talking about the restoration to come many, many years later.

This is the date on which we want to focus. Ezekiel 40:1 says: In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year (which would be the seventh month; the year begins in the fall), in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God he brought me to the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, and he saw the whole scene there.

He gives a very precise date. He says this was in the fourteenth year after the city was smitten. The city was smitten in 587 B.C. The fourteenth year after that—thirteen years would have elapsed—was the year 574 B.C., the date of the vision. That was in the fall of the year. That was a very, very special year. That year

was the last reference to a Jubilee Year of Israel. It would have gone from 574- 573, from the fall to the fall, as all Jubilees did.

What does that date point to? That date is the prefiguring of the restoration of Israel again, with their restored people. That date would be 1947, fall to fall, 1947- 1948.

Israel was declared a nation again in May of 1948. 1948 was the year that they actually decreed that they would be independent. That was when they stipulated that it would be effective in May of 1948.

This date point is an exact correlation to the vision of Ezekiel.

610- 603 B.C. pictures the time of World War I, its precursor and aftermath. 597 pictures the time that the Nazi regime started to take root, the Manifesto came out. 589- 87 pictures the time the Nazis and Hitler took over Germany, with the intended and declared purpose of wiping out Judaism. They began to do that. 582, the last captivity recorded in the Bible, predicts the date of 1939, World War II, which finally broke things open and allowed Israel to go back. The vision of the restoration, finally coalescing, pointed to the year 1947- 48, when Israel was restored.

The kernel of this prophecy was thought about, published, and prolifically considered and discussed among Protestant Christian circles almost a hundred years before it came to pass. Of course, they could not know exactly what would transpire. They laid out the dates, not knowing what details would fit. What an intriguing pointer to our day in history, concerning the re- establishment of the nation of Israel.

When did this all began? It began just a few years after 1874. According to Ben- Gurion, it all began in 1878 when the Jews were able to go back to their land to be re- established again.

Here are some of the parallels:

Let us think back to the destruction of Judaism by the Romans. The Babylonian Empire was the first empire that destroyed the temple of Israel. The last empire that destroyed the temple of Israel was the Roman Empire, in Jesus' day. In Matthew 24, we read that that was going to happen, and it did happen in 70 A.D.

There was more than a one- year episode unleashed in 70 A.D. That year does not contain the whole experience of what happened

in Israel. 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed the temple, was a culmination of a rebellion by the Jews against Rome which had really started a few years earlier.

I opened a book about this period—the rebellion of the Jews against Rome—and saw it described as the seven years of the Roman wars. —We have found seven to be such a prominent number in these studies. —Those seven years of the Roman wars were from 66- 73 A.D. That's when the Jews revolted. In 70, the temple was destroyed. In 73, some had fled to the rock fortress of Masada. Masada is the famous location where the Jews, rather than be captured, committed suicide, leaving stores of grain, showing they didn't starve to death. They willingly took their lives as free men. That was the collapse of that rebellion.

1911- 1918 is the seven year parallel. It is all linked together with the prophecy of Daniel 9. Daniel 9 told of weeks of years that would transpire before the Messiah would come and die. Most of the prophecies were gauged in days—1260 days, 1290 days, 1335 days. There was an odd prophecy that was sequenced in, not days but, weeks of years—in increments of seven years apiece. When was that last week of the prophecy of the seventy weeks ? It was 26- 33 A.D. Jesus expired on the cross in 33 A.D., finishing that period.

26- 33 A.D. is forty years before 66- 73 A.D. —Forty in the Scriptures is a period of testing and probation. It's as though God said, From the last week of your favor, I'm going to give you an additional probationary period before I finally bring judgment to bear and you will be destroyed.

Jesus had said, Upon this generation shall all these things fall. —It really did fall. In Luke the 19th chapter, he gave one of the saddest accounts of what was going to come to pass. It was when he was riding into Jerusalem, during the last week of his life on earth. He was ready to be acclaimed Hosanna by the crowds, but as he entered Jerusalem and saw it, he wept over the city. He knew they would ultimately betray him.

Lu 19:41 —When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from you. The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy

children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation.

That was all descriptive of what would happen in the consummation, the conflagration, that ended their age, just forty years later.

If this is a parallel to the time when the Jews would be restored, 1911- 1918 A.D., let us go back forty years and see what happened. That would be the years 1871- 1878 A.D. 1878 was the year when David Ben- Gurion said they began to return to the land. That parallels the time when they had been cast off. Jesus said, Your house is left unto you desolate, as he exited the temple area the last time, and then he saw them no more until he was captured to be put on the cross. That parallels the time when the LORD suddenly intervened to have Israel secure their right to come back to their land and have equal protection of the law. These things did not happen by chance.

In 1878, the Berlin Conference of Nations was assembled to settle the Russo- Turkish war. The person that was very prominent in this conference was the prime minister of England. That year, unlike any other year, they had a Jew as prime minister. He was a Christianized Jew. He's referred to as Disraeli. His technical name was Lord Beaconsfield.

He was Jewish by birth. When he was negotiating the treaty, he had in his heart a concern for his Jewish brethren. Because of his influence, that treaty gave Israel the right to go back again.

26 A.D. was the time when Pontius Pilate became governor of Judea, which set the stage for the last episode which would climax with Jesus' death and, because of that, bring retribution upon Israel forty years later.

That last week was the week about which God said, I will confirm the covenant with many for one week. Then, your opportunities will be over. —That opportunity ended when Jesus expired on the cross.

It is interesting that all of the dates we have considered that led to the re- establishment of Israel involved one crucial political entity. They were all about Germany. Toward the end of the Jewish era, Pontius Pilate became governor, and all the succeeding episodes that vanquished Israel were all about the Roman Empire. —The corollary date, 1871, was the date of the Germanic Empire of

modern times. Right after the Franco- Prussian War, this was part of the treaty, part of the state of affairs that were going on in the aftermath. The German Federation changed into Germany as we know it today. That was the precursor to all the troubles that started the war in 1911- 1914.

Who started World War II? Germany. Who persecuted the Jews in between? Germany. Germany was the precursor, the causative factor in all those events. In this day of political correctness, nobody likes to put blame anywhere. Many of us are of German descent. It is not a matter of bias. It is a matter of looking at the facts. Just as Rome, through Pontius Pilate, was the causative factor in the persecution of the Jews at the end of the Jewish Age, So Germany, through Hitler, was the causative factor in the persecution of the Jews in these last days.

We've tried to extract from prophecy, first, the things that are most positive in fulfillment. We found that in the 1260 years. It was unambiguously clear that the 1260 years was a prophecy intended by the Lord, repeated seven times in Daniel and Revelation, So that we can depend on it like a rock. We feel secure in that.

Thirty years later was the time of a movement looking forward to the Lord's Return. 1874 is the time that this prophecy suggests is the beginning of the end of time. 1874 is the midpoint of our study. The midpoint of the end of the Jewish era was 29 A.D. In 29 A.D., Jesus began the Jewish Harvest that climaxed the Jewish Age.

In John, the 4th chapter, Jesus said, The fields are ripe, ready to harvest. —(Not literally. It was really four months away. Figuratively, spiritually, it was ready.) That harvest lasted many years. That harvest lasted until Jerusalem was climaxed in 66- 73 A.D. It even went beyond that, because some Jewish communities were scattered abroad, and the harvest still continued. The harvest was a period of years that endured.

Here, we suggest that 1874 shows us the date point when the end of the age came, and the beginning of the end of the Christian era was due.

Let us look at Revelation 14 to see what that says about the Harvest work at the end of the age. Revelation 14:14 says: I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

We are interested in reading the description of the Harvest, remembering what Jesus said—that when we see the End Time coming, we should leave any institutions that are not favorable to the Body of Christ. We are to leave the system that held sway for so many years, and any daughter system that has the spirit of the mother.

Re 14:8 —There followed another angel, saying, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.’ This is referring to spiritual Babylon, Christendom, the great harlot.

Re 14:9 —The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If any man worship this beast or anything like it, the same will drink of the wrath of God.’

Let’s go even farther back, to see the preceding announcement, that preceded this call to come out. Revelation 14:6 —I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of the waters.’ And there followed another angel, ‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen’ ... And the third angel, ‘Don’t worship them.’

What we see here is that when the harvest of the Gospel Age begins, when the period that is climaxing the Christian era begins, we start with a proclamation of three things:

(1) We hear a call to leave any system that is illicit or bad. We saw that same thing in Matthew 24 that would mark the end of the age, a call to leave any system that is teaching anything akin to the old Babylonish system. Go to the Lord. Flee to the mountains.

(2) Here, we also see the call of the everlasting Gospel going out to every creature. We’re at the end of the age, and the call of the Gospel really started in 33 A.D. How do we distinguish this call in Revelation from the call that started back at the beginning of the age? How do we distinguish the call during the Harvest of the age from the call that has been going out all through the age? The way that they can be distinguished is that the call and the understanding of the Divine Plan that had been darkened through the age is now re-established at the end of the age.

Let's think back about what was happening in the movement of Christian people during this period of history. There were some people who, as early as 100 years before this, predicted that something radical would happen about this time in history. They didn't live in the Time of the End yet. They didn't understand it thoroughly.

As an example, there was a man named Fleming who predicted (almost a hundred years ahead of time) that something would happen in France.

He realized the events would be difficult and upsetting. He didn't have the exact time, he expected them to occur in 1793 or something like that; but, based on his studies in prophecy, he believed these events would come. When the French Revolution did occur, prophetic writers began to take note of those predictions which had been made earlier. That awakened the Christian community to these prophecies of Daniel.

Catholic Christians were not inclined to be interested in prophecies that told of persecution by Catholicism toward other Christians. It was Protestant Christians who saw that these prophecies told of a political- ecclesiastical system ruling Europe for centuries. Protestant expositors recognized this to be taking place in that period of history.

About this time, in 1829, when the Adventist movement began to grow, other thoughts began to come in to the Protestant church. It was like a wake- up call—not only to study prophecy, but to study many other things of interest with respect to the divine plan. —If we didn't understand prophecy correctly, if we were just coming out of the Dark Ages and becoming aware of things, if Bibles are beginning to proliferate and we're starting to study again, maybe we've lost a few other truths also.

They began to study more deeply. They realized that there was a greater hope for man than that which they had seen before. They saw that, after the coming of Christ and the establishment of his Kingdom, there would be an opportunity for others to receive life again.

Let us turn to Revelation 20, a passage which clearly takes us to this End of the Age. Revelation 20:1- 3: I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him. —

Why is Satan being bound? This is the reason: That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. —That's the reason Satan will be bound—so he can't deceive anybody.

Who would benefit from that? Who would benefit from the fact that Satan would be incarcerated for 1000 years? Are we? If we're faithful, we'll be with the Lord. We'll be in the spiritual realm by that time—joint- heirs with Christ, we'll be kings and priests then.

He shall be bound that he should deceive the nations no more. — That implies that somebody is still here on earth. They are not the elect. —Somebody else is left that is benefiting from this Thousand- Year Kingdom. This is the kind of scripture that caused people to think. —Maybe there's a hope for mankind which we hadn't seen clearly.

It had been in the interest of the papal system to see, Either you're with us, in good standing, and not a heretic, or you're excommunicated. —Excommunication wasn't just, Please leave. It was, Leave, and you lose your life forever. If you're not part of the church, you have no salvation. —There was no incentive to look at Scripture and see if that was true. After that Dark Age period ended, people began re- studying and began to see the broader hope. It was nebulous. They saw scriptures, but they weren't sure precisely what way they were taking the reader. Various expositors, one after another, began to see something more about this, and it developed that about this time things began to take crisper shape.

Let us turn to the year 1874, and see what was happening among some of these Adventists. What were they thinking?

The Miller movement, and the Adventist movement of his day, was predicting the return of Christ in one way. William Miller may be considered the father of the movement, but he was not the only scholar among them. He had the 1260 years about right. He used the years 538- 1798 A.D., which was only a year off. There were significant events at those dates. That would not be a big problem.

William Miller thought the Lord was going to return in 1843. That was based on Daniel the 8th chapter, which speaks of 2300 days, which he thought ended in 1843. He thought, Surely all of the

other prophetic testimony should come to about the same time. — When he looked at the 1290- day prophecy, if 1290 years would come to an end in 1829, and Miller himself was just becoming aware of these prophecies, there was no way that he would think it would end then. There was nothing significant for him to see yet. His movement hadn't really taken hold. There was nothing that seemed to have happened.

Therefore, William Miller decided that the 1290- day prophecy must have begun earlier. He began them at 508. That ended them at the same time as the 1260- day prophecy. Then, he took the 1335 days and did something similar. He figured that 1843 was the end of the world. He expected that in 1843 the earth would be cleansed and purged and destroyed. He followed the old concept that, when Christ would return, the earth would be burned to a cinder.

Many of the people in his movement began to see that there was more involved than just that.

Let us see what there was in Daniel 8 that gave Bro. Miller his view. Daniel 8:14 —Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. —William Miller supposed that the sanctuary was God's footstool, the earth.

How would the earth be cleansed? He supposed that the cleansing would be accomplished by fire—burned to a cinder. That was his understanding of how the sanctuary would be cleansed.

Who is the true sanctuary of the Lord? The church. Whose temple are we? We are the temple of the living God. The sanctuary is not the earth, but the church.

The church has been beset by defiling errors for a long time. Prophecy said that, about this time in history, the church would begin to be cleansed from some of these errors which the Dark Ages had put upon them.

There was an Adventist of this time, Nelson Barbour. He was very disappointed that the Lord had not returned in 1843. He didn't become irreligious, but he went into secular occupation, disappointed. He was something like the apostles, after Jesus died. They didn't know what to do, So they returned to their fishing business. That was the way with Bro. Barbour.

He went to Australia—a gold miner, I believe—he didn't have much success there. He was on his way back to America. While he was en route on the ship, a chaplain said, We have time to kill. Why don't we read the prophecies of Daniel?

As they were reading the prophecies, he noted the mistake that William Miller had made. He realized, William Miller started the 1290 years thirty years too soon. He should have begun them all at the same time. Let's re-work the prophecies and see what happens. If we begin the 1290 years in 538, we come to 1928. That's when the Adventist movement began to thrive. If we extend the 1335 years forward from 538, that would be 1873. —He was excited.

When Barbour got to England, on his way back to America, he went to a library and found a book called Apocalyptica by Elliot. Elliot was a famous author regarding prophecy. In that book, Barbour saw a chronology which showed that 6000 years of the world's history would expire about 1873 (plus or minus a couple of years).

He thought, This is it! Six thousand years of earth's history is almost complete. The seventh millennium is about to begin. —He was thrilled.

Nelson Barbour was essentially on the right track. What about 1843? What about 1843 and the cleansing of the sanctuary would be of any value to us?

The cleansing of the sanctuary referred to the cleansing from the errors that had come to the sanctuary. Let's look at Daniel 8 to see what cleansing was necessary in the sanctuary.

Da 8:12 —A host was given to this persecuting factor against the daily sacrifice by reason of the transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; it practiced, and it prospered. —The truth was being totally defiled. There would be a great falling away from the faith. That was what was going to happen.

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint, 'How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give the sanctuary to be trodden under foot?

And he said, 'Unto two thousand, three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.' This is the date at which the defiling

errors that had occurred during the papal dominion would start to be rolled away.

What did happen in 1843? A great disappointment. A GREAT disappointment. They were waiting for the Lord's return, and he didn't come. Then they modified it, and said, Maybe we're off a year. —Now they chose 1844. The spring of 1844 rolled around. Nothing. They were disappointed again.

This time, they said, Wait. We notice in Scripture that the autumn is specially prominent. They waited until October 22, 1844, the beginning of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. That was a day of SEVERE disappointment. That was the day you sometimes read about in books—the people dressed in linen garb, waiting for the Lord to come and take them away.

Those are heart- rending accounts of the brethren then who were waiting for their Lord. Their enemies taunted them. The Book of Revelation tells what the Lord thought of these dear ones who were doing the best they could, but missed the point.

The churches in Revelation are described consecutively. We, at the end of the age, are church Number Seven. To go back to the Miller movement, we go back to church Number Six. Revelation 3:7 — To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; 'These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, ... I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door. —We think that is the opening of the door to the New World where Christianity could flourish. Revelation 3:9 —I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because you have kept the word of my patience. I will also keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: —I'm not here yet, but I come quickly: hold fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem.

I will write upon him my new name. That's the assurance God gave to these dear brethren.

When William Miller was disappointed, 1843, he was cast out of his church. He was a member of a small Baptist church, and when

his expectations did not meet a fulfillment, that Baptist church kindly invited him to leave. That happened to many people at that time. Ever since that time, Christians have been reticent to do anything about a day- for- a- year prophecy or anything about the end of the age.

God said, You are disappointed, but I appreciate what you have done. I will preserve you from the hour of temptation.

People began to think more about other things in Scripture—not just readjusting prophecy. A great awakening of a new hope began to take shape. Many of the old dogmas of the Dark Ages began to be weeded out, one by one, slowly, not all at once. Gradually, the church began to see things more clearly.

Finally, about 1873, 1874, there came a formative movement that began to declare with unequalled vibrancy the message of the coming Kingdom and the transition of the ages. This message was preached about forty years before the leader of that movement was finally taken in death. He was probably the most prolific teacher and published author of Christian works in the world of his time.

His name was Charles Russell, a prolific author, but after he died the movement that he had founded began to go a wrong way. But the TRUTHS which he had enunciated took root in many Christian hearts. He is the one who propounded the coming Kingdom and the near culmination of this world's episodes that would follow shortly.

For many years, he looked forward to the year 1914 as the climax of earth's experiences. Some of his expectations were not borne out, but something did happen that brought back to Israel their hope of returning to their land.

We have followed several Christian expositors: John Aquila Brown, William Miller, Nelson Barbour, Fleming, Russell, Adventists. Our reference to all of these people is to discern from the pages of history the progress that has been made to the end of the age and the impending establishment of Christ's Kingdom by many prophetic scholars through the age.

We're not Adventists. We're people who look at the prophecies by whatever expounders have adequately brought to our attention. We're trying to focus on prophecies, truth, and the testimony of prophecy which is due in our day.

We find that, about the year 1874 and forward, the pronouncement of the incoming Kingdom took on a fresher vigor than it had ever had before.

We are still looking forward to the full establishment of that Kingdom. There are passages in Revelation that describe matters that immediately precipitate the establishment of that Kingdom. In Revelation, the 16th chapter, it speaks of seven plagues that come to pass upon the old world. The last plague to come is Armageddon itself. Armageddon will phase out the old, and initiate the new world, the new Kingdom established on earth. By that time, we trust that the Lord's people, the saints of the Most High, will be beyond the veil in glory. They will witness these experiences from the other side.

We should discuss the Jewish Jubilees. We should discuss how long mankind has been upon the earth. We should discuss how long it may be before mankind will experience that blessed Millennium. There is much in prophecy still to be discussed.

DAY 6, PART 1- REVIEW

DICK KINDIG: Welcome to Day Six of the Bible Prophecy Seminar. Before we begin, we would like to begin by reading a scripture in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:3 —Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

It's a blessing to read, it's a blessing to hear, and it's a blessing to keep the words which we find in these prophecies that we are considering.

The Apostle John, when he received the Revelation, records in Chapter 22, verse 8, that (when he had seen and heard) he fell down to worship before the feet of the messenger who had showed these things to him. The messenger wisely said, See that thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren. —Let's avoid sectarian pitfalls. Focus on the message, not the messenger.

DAVID RICE: When we study prophecy, we know that prophecy is going to inherently require interpretation. There are two reasons for that God designed it this way: One reason is to make sure that those who pursued the prophecy would be the ones who will get the blessing from it. The Lord is not interested yet in making things so plain that the casual reader would have it very clear to them. Some day He will do that, when the Kingdom of God comes

to be established in the earth. Things will then be made So plain that the casual cannot misunderstand.

In this, our day, that is not the case. Now, He is calling an elect Little Flock. He's calling just a few to become a part of the Bride of Christ. The character development that implies in us requires some motivation, discipline, some earnest searching.

Beyond that reason, we have another fact. As you know, the Scriptures have had many enemies over the centuries. Many wrong views have been attached to Scripture. Some have even used Scripture to support their incorrect opinion. This causes corruption of Scripture, and it happens from time to time. Scholars have weeded out much of this, and we have information about that.

One thing you cannot corrupt is something you don't understand. When somebody gives you a prophecy, if you respect the integrity of the source of the prophecy, you copy it down word for word. Not knowing what it's about, you have no bias to decide whether you should alter it or not.

The prophecies given to Daniel are of that kind. They are prophecies that could not be fully understood until our day. If they could not be understood, all he could do was to copy them down. Succeeding generations could read this, and know that the integrity of the text had been pretty well maintained.

To preserve the integrity of a text that is due to be understood at a later time, and to make sure that those who will benefit from the text are the ones who are diligently searching—these are the reasons that prophecy is not as crisp as we might prefer it to be. We'll rely on the wisdom of God. He is the One Who directed the method, and So we know it is for the wisest purpose.

In Isaiah, there was a prophecy about a young maiden who would have a child. Before that child was old enough to know the difference between right and wrong, something was going to happen in the land of Israel. That prophecy had a contemporary fulfilment.

Of course, it had a much more important fulfilment for us hundreds of years later. Then a young maiden, unmarried, bore a child—a virgin birth—the birth of Christ. The prophecy had been a contemporary prophecy fulfilled in a natural way when it was given. Then, it was fulfilled in a miraculous way with our Lord's birth.

We mention that to show the kind of diversity which prophecy has. Sometimes there is more than one meaning to it. If there is more than one meaning to it, the prophecy would be worded in a way that could have two interpretations, two meanings, two applications at different times.

Because of that, prophecy sometimes has to be carefully considered and all the options examined to be sure we have the right approach. Some prophecies are more obvious than others.

It seems wise to start the study of prophecy by looking at the ones that are easiest to comprehend—how they are directly fulfilled.

Daniel 11 is like this. It makes a positive foundation for further study. Lay down the fundamental issues. Secure them. Build upon them. Later, it is acceptable to go into prophecies that are more interpretive. As you build higher, extend from the most secure ones.

Daniel 11 is an example of how fundamental the basics of prophecy are. Daniel 11 is introduced in Chapter 10. In Chapter 11, the angel begins to give Daniel the prophecies that he is promised.

Da 11:1 —I (the angel) in the first year of Darius the Mede, stood to confirm and to strengthen Michael. Now I will show thee the truth. There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

First, we must learn, when is now ? When is he talking? Go back to Chapter 10, verse 1, and we read, In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia was a thing revealed to Daniel. —That's the context for this prophecy. Daniels, chapters 10, 11, and 12 are one complete narrative. They are not separate occasions. It is just one account, broken into chapters for our convenience.

Therefore, if this starts in the reign of Cyrus, he says that, as of that time, there will yet stand up three kings in Persia. The next one was Cambyses, then Smerdis (who didn't even reign a full year—he just reigned a few months), and then Darius (not Darius the Mede, we mustn't confuse them; this was Darius the Persian). Those were the three kings.

Then, the prophecy says, The fourth will be far richer than they all. —Herodotus bears this out. Herodotus was a Greek historian who

narrated the episodes of history (recently preceding him) from his perspective. He tells us all about this era.

Herodotus tells us about the fact that Xerxes was wealthier than anyone preceding him, and that he amalgamated an entire army (Herodotus may be exaggerating—Herodotus says 5,000,000" men, and many say that's not credible) —the largest, accumulated land army that the world had known to that day. It may have been exceeded since then, but to that day it was the largest. Xerxes assembled that force and took it against Greece.

The preparations for that battle, that campaign, are told in the Book of Esther. There was something like a six- month feast for all Xerxes' nobles. The Bible doesn't tell us why he was having this feast, but following this, the Book of Esther has a gap of a couple of years. That was when he was out on his campaign. (Esther's king Ahasuerus was the Hebrew name for Xerxes.)

When Xerxes came back, he consoled himself with the pleasures of his harem, and that's when Esther was chosen as the queen of the harem.

During that time, Xerxes had been unsuccessfully campaigning against Greece. Greece was one area the Persian empire never conquered. That was most surprising, because Persia was almost unstoppable. Even after they failed to capture Greece, during Xerxes' reign, they still went on for many, many years. They were still the empire of force. It was just that they never conquered Greece.

485 B.C. dates Xerxes. 343 B.C. is the time of Alexander. There was about 150 years in which Persia continued to be the dominant empire.

This prophecy says, after three kings there would be that famous Grecian campaign that would be disastrous for Persia.

The next scripture jumps right to the next world empire. Daniel 11:3 —A mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. —It doesn't say where that king comes from. Greece has been mentioned in the prophecy, So it seems logical that he came from Greece.

Daniel 8 affirms this suspicion. Greece is the next kingdom after Persia. Daniel 8 signifies this kingdoms in a little different way.

Every one of these visions uses different pictures. Here we have only two of the kingdoms represented.

Daniel 8 starts, In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar (king of Babylon). —This vision is going to show Daniel what's coming next.

Da 8:3 —I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

This is very significant. The Medo- Persian Empire, which was to come, was an empire that had two powers to it—two horns. The Medes were always the more forceful power, from early on. By the time this power conquered Babylon and became the dominant world empire, Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, had risen to supremacy over the Medes and Persians. That's why it says there were two horns, and that the higher horn (the more powerful) came up last. Cyrus, King of Persia, took control after the Medes had traditionally been in power.

It's interesting that a ram is chosen here. Look at pictures of old coins from the Persian Empire. The emblem on these coins was a ram—a ram with two horns! It is intriguing that the symbol that was used in Daniel attached directly to the symbol that was common for their state coins.

Da 8:4 —I saw the ram pushing west, and north, and south; no beast could stand before him. —In Daniel 7, we saw that beasts represented governments. The same is true here. No beast, no government, could withstand the might of the Persian Empire.

Da 8:5 —As I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground. —He was going So quickly. We use the expression, when we're driving too fast, We're flying low. —Perhaps a goat would skip across the ground barely touching the ground—pursuing quickly.

This goat came from the West. True. The Grecian goat came from the West. Consider where the Medo- Persian was located on the map. The goat, Greece, Alexander's empire, moved rapidly from the West to world conquest. Alexander, at the age of twenty, started his campaigns, and in thirteen years he was at the borders of India. He was lightning- quick.

All of these symbols of Daniel portray all of those features.

Da 8:5 —The goat had a notable horn between his eyes—not two horns like the other one, just one horn. This is Alexander, of course.

Da 8:6 —He came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing by the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler (anger) against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and was very strong.

When Alexander took the empire, he was represented by a goat. The coins of the Grecian Empire of the day had a goat with ONE horn. The prophecies of Daniel used the emblems that were current in Alexander's day.

If you were going to represent America, you would probably use the bald eagle. For England, you would use the lion. Symbols do become attached to certain countries. Daniel saw visions which used the symbols that later identified the countries even on their own coins.

Further, in verse 8, we read a very significant point: When he was strong, the great horn was broken. —He was broken at the height of his strength. Alexander had just conquered the world. He returned to the area of Babylon. He wasn't killed in battle, or by force, or by an enemy. He was killed by his own dissolution. He was killed by alcohol and disease. It seems such a pity that this man, in the epitome of his virility and strength, was broken by his own abusive life style.

Alexander was broken when he was So young that his child could not take the kingdom. It therefore had to be partitioned to his four generals. —For it came up four notable horns toward the four winds of heaven. —That is exactly what happened when Alexander died.

How could Daniel know that, 150 years before the episode transpired? How could he know that Greece would be next, and that when that king would be broken he would be succeeded by four rulers who were not even his descendants? It's an incredible prophecy.

In verses 20 and 21, we find a very explicit interpretation. When Daniel gives us an interpretation So explicit, he clinches our thoughts perfectly. We thought the rams were representing Medo-Persia and Greece; now it's very clear and specific. —The ram which you saw having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand out of the nation, but not in his power. — Very, very clear. We start there because it is So explicit. That's just the way world history unfolded. The four generals were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus. The Ptolemys ruled Egypt for a long time after that. History speaks of the Seleucid Empire.

Critics join us in marveling at the preciseness of this prophecy. However, critics do not believe in inspiration, as we do. Rather than believe that God revealed these predictions to Daniel miraculously, they say someone must have written the account of the prophetic visions after they were fulfilled. Everybody acknowledges that a man, even Daniel, could not have know what facts would transpire 150 years before they happened. No one would have assumed that the little, scattered conglomeration of city states of Grecian people would develop into the great Grecian Empire.

As a matter of fact, critics have said the Book of Daniel was written during the time of the Maccabees, when the Jews began to defeat the Seleucid Empire. They have said the Book of Daniel was composed in 165 B.C. Scripture says it was composed in 538 B.C. Now, critics are beginning to bend on this because of the internal evidence in Daniel, the first six chapters. Critics are beginning to acknowledge that the first six chapters were probably written by a Jew who lived in Babylon.

Daniel 5 spoke of the fall of Babylon. That night, they had a riotous festival, when Belshazzar suddenly saw the handwriting on the wall. His knees smote together, he was So afraid. He called Daniel who interpreted the writing, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Thy kingdom shall be given to the Medes and the Persians. That very night, Belshazzar was slain.

What king in his right mind would have a feast, when his kingdom was ready to crumble, when the enemies were all around outside his wall?

When Sennacherib invaded Jerusalem and Hezekiah was inside, knowing the siege was all around, Hezekiah and the people were fasting, anxiously concerned. God delivered them.

Why would the Babylonians, in similar dire circumstances, have a festival? That is something an author of fiction would not include in a narrative. It would sound too incredibly foolish. But modern archeologists have found tablets that identify the calendar dates for the feasts honoring gods, the Moon God Sin in particular. That evening (we now know, because of historical records), Belshazzar was celebrating the normal feast to their moon god. Sure that their secure walls would keep the invader out, the Babylonians proceeded with their customary, scheduled feast.

Daniel had to be at the scene. He'd never make up such a fantastic story. —Truth is stranger than fiction. —If it hadn't been true, it would have too strange for anyone to believe.

Another feature shows the integrity of the account. There was an offer made to whoever could interpret the handwriting on the wall. Daniel 5:8 says, Then came in all the king's men: they couldn't read it ... Belshazzar was greatly troubled ... the queen standing by said, 'I remember a wise man Daniel.'

Da 5:7, The king cried aloud and spake and said, 'Here's what I will give to whoever can read this: Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation, shall be clothed in scarlet, have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be third ruler in the kingdom.'

That sounds innocent enough, but it's a pretty grand prize. Why didn't he offer second place in the kingdom? Because Belshazzar was not first in the kingdom. Nobody knew that for hundreds of years. It wasn't until the 1800s when tablets of Mesopotamia were dug up, that finally a man named Philip Dougherty, of Yale University, wrote a treatise called Belshazzar and Nabonidus. — This was in the 1920s. Mr. Dougherty said, We always knew the real emperor's name was Nabonidus, he had a son named Belshazzar, whom he appointed to rule on his behalf in his absence. —Sometimes Nabonidus would leave the city for months at a time, or years at a time.

Suddenly, Belshazzar fits. He's second in the kingdom—second in command to his father. All these times, when critics have insisted that Belshazzar was never a king of Babylon, they were incorrect. Common archeology discovery now says, He certainly was. — That explains why he could only offer the third place in the kingdom.

If Daniel had been a fraud, he would not have thought of such a detail. This small thing confirms that Daniel was on the scene at the time, knowing who was first in command, and who was second.

While the critics are thus forced to bend on the first six chapters of Daniel, they dare not bend on chapters 7- 12. If they do, they are forced to acknowledge that there is divine inspiration in the visions of Daniel. Of course they are apprehensive about making that admission.

Daniel 9 cannot be gainsaid by the critics if they acknowledge how it fits. This is the prophecy of the Messiah of Israel to come. Verse 24: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Who brought in everlasting righteousness? Jesus. The Messiah. It says, The Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister to others, and to give his life a ransom for the many. —That's what he did. He died as a ransom- price to rescue us from sin.

Da 9:25 —Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince. —The Old Testament word Messiah is equivalent to the New Testament word Christ. —If this were translated from Greek, it would say Messiah the Anointed, Christ the Anointed. That, of course, was Jesus. The Jewish Messiah was to come in the last week of this prophecy.

When it says, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, there are three choices to explain that. (1) Cyrus, the king of Persia who conquered Babylon, did allow some Jews to go back and rebuild. (2) So did Artaxerxes. We found in Ezra 7 that he gave a decree, Go back and rebuild the temple, and re- fortify, and he gave me the privilege to go back and rebuild the

walls and establish the city gates again. —These are the three choices.

The three dates are: 538 B.C. —Cyrus's decree. 458 B.C. —the decree of Artaxerxes to send Ezra back. 445 B.C. —the decree that sent Nehemiah back.

The prophecy is for seventy weeks. Most commentators agree that this does not mean weeks of days, but weeks of years. 490 years is seventy weeks of years.

It is 458 B.C. + 490 years that ends at the year 33 A.D. We recognize that as the proven year of Jesus on the cross.

We proved the year 33 A.D. by the reign of Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor. There was only one year in that span when the Passover of Nisan 14 fell on a Friday. Also, in Luke 3:1, it says, In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, that's when John the Baptist came into the wilderness and began his service. Since Tiberius began his reign when Augustus died, and that was in 14 A.D., fifteen years would bring us to the date of 29 A.D. That's when John the Baptist began his ministry, early in the year. Jesus came six months later, 29 A.D. in the autumn of the year.

From 29 A.D. (Autumn) to 33 A.D. (Spring) is 3- 1/2 years. We go through the Book of John, and see the mention of a Passover (verse 13) after Jesus was baptized. John 5:1 mentions a feast of the Jews, which many believe is the Feast of Passover. If it isn't the Feast of Passover, it is the Feast of Purim, which is about the same time. In John 6:4, it says, And the Passover was nigh at hand. —That makes three Passovers.

Finally, Jesus died during Passover. That makes four Passovers, verifying the fact that Jesus' ministry lasted 3- 1/2 years.

Even critics agree that the Book of Daniel was intact long before Jesus came. For this one prophecy to be fulfilled So precisely, we must believe that Daniel was an inspired prophet. This causes us to rest confidently that his other prophecies were also correct.

We are still using the day- for- a- year concept in understanding prophecy. Ever since God had the spies going in to Palestine for forty days, and they brought back a bad report, He punished them for forty years and said, Every day will be punished by a year. —

Ezekiel lay on his side 430 days to represent 430 years of punishment for Israel, ending with the Maccabees cleansing their temple and freeing themselves temporarily from their oppressors. Daniel 10, 11, and 12 also has a hint of this day- for- a- year concept: Verse 2: In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. —He fasted for that time. Verse 13: The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days: and Michael came to help me. —From the time that Daniel prayed until the temple was finished was exactly 21 years (Ezra 6:15), fulfilling the 21- DAY delay which the angel experienced in coming to Daniel.

Reviewing, Daniel 2 told us of the image—head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet of iron and clay. In Daniel 7 told us of the beasts—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a great ten- horned beast. These are four kings, four world empires. That's clear, consistent, correct. Daniel has accurately predicted four empires to come—Babylon during his lifetime, the other three after he died.

The ten horns and the feet of iron and clay show the later fragmentation of these four world empires.

There was the stout horn that emerged after the fourth empire dissolved.

Both prophecies insisted that they would be climaxed by the establishment of another Kingdom that would never be destroyed, the Kingdom of our Heavenly Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus. It would be established upon the ruins of that which had preceded it. Too many Christians have missed the point, that the Kingdom of Christ would supplant the four universal empires, after a long period during which the saints would be persecuted. It will be here, on this earth, that the Kingdom of Christ will be set up and never destroyed.

In Matthew 6:10, a part of the Sermon on the Mount, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. He began this model prayer respectfully, as we always should with a note of reverence to the Heavenly Father, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. —

His very next expression, in this model prayer, was, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Of course, we want His will to be done in us. We want to be agents for that. But Jesus is praying for the time when His will would be

done thoroughly—on earth, as it is in heaven. That's what Daniel promised. A Kingdom would be established, and would rule and govern over all. This immediately tells us that there's something more to the Christian message than that which we receive by faith now.

Daniel, the 7th chapter, is very clear that that Kingdom will be ruled over by the Saints of the Most High. Daniel 7:21 —I beheld, and this horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment (vindication) was given to the Saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom.

Da 7:18 —The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Da 7:27 —The Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

This says that the saints will be in charge of the Kingdom, and all peoples will worship.

Da 7:14 —There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

It's very clear, in this passage, that the kingdom is to rule over people. That implies that there must be a probation, an opportunity for life, and a resurrection of the dead, So that all can come back to life in the Thousand- Year Millennial Kingdom. After the Gospel has been preached and gathered the elect church of Christ, there will be a full administration of a Kingdom on earth for the blessing and uplift of all the remainder of the world.

Revelation 20 shows that God is going to do something He has not yet fully accomplished. He's going to thoroughly remove every vestige of the great Adversary's influence.

Instead of doing that, why doesn't God just destroy the Adversary? Why bind him for a thousand years, to let him loose later? Why not be done with him, kill him? God isn't doing it that way. God puts the Devil into a bottomless pit (symbolically).

He only incarcerates him because He has a use for him later. Just as Satan was the vehicle whom God used to permit a test upon Adam, So Adam and his family (reclaimed by the blood of Christ in the Kingdom), after a thousand years of learning instruction in righteousness, will be permitted by God to be tested again. Satan will again be the vehicle to try to deceive man. There is to be a test at the end of the Thousand Years. At the end of the Thousand Years, it says, fire came out of heaven and devoured them. —All the ungodly will be destroyed at that point. But these ungodly will have had experience with the Devil's ways. They will have every opportunity to learn righteousness as well as the terrible effects of sin.

This is a very clear representation of God's plan and what is going to come to pass.

Now let us turn back in time to the 1260 years of persecution, the 3- 1/2 years, the 42 months of Revelation 11, 12, and 13, as well as Daniel. This experience is discussed in Thessalonians. The subject of II Thessalonians 2 is the return of Christ. —

In Chapter 4 of his first epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul had told them something about the return of Christ—when the elect would receive their reward and be with him in glory.

In I Thessalonians 5:1, Paul wrote, But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. —They knew that because they remembered Matthew 24 where Jesus talked about the thief coming in the night, and we have to watch and be prepared, So we should be watching and preparing, lest he come upon us unawares.

The Thessalonian brethren put this together, and realized that the return of Jesus would be as a thief in the night. A thief doesn't announce his presence. A thief operates quietly, unobserved, and without outward commotion, lest he be discovered. That is the way Christ's second advent would be. All the brethren grasped that fact. Thinking about the fact that Christ's return would be like a thief, and his appearance would not be discernible, the world would be in ignorance of it, we should be alert and looking for its signs—they wondered, Is it possible that we're already at the end of the age? They were So anxious to have the age end, and the Lord return, that the thought occurred to them, Perhaps it has already come. — If it is thieflike, maybe it has come and we haven't been aware of it.

In II Thessalonians, Paul writes them to correct that misapprehension.

He says, We beseech you, brethren, by the parousia (same word that Jesus used in Matthew 24) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering unto him, That you be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled, not by spirit, or word, or by a letter from us, that the day of Christ is at hand. The words at hand is not a good translation. It means to be present.

Don't think that the day of Christ is already come. Don't think that we're already in the transition of the ages, in the harvest of the age. It's too early for that, much too early.

Paul could have let it go at that, but he usually gives a reason for what he says. He gives them the evidence, So they can try it themselves from prophecy. That's what Paul proceeded to do, to prove to them that the return of Christ was a premature expectation in their day.

II Thessalonians 2:3—Let no man deceive you by any means: that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember, that, when I was with you, I told you these things? —Paul told them many things which we don't have recorded. He's reminding them that he told them all about this episode.

Where is Paul getting this information? How does Paul know there's going to be a man of sin that is going to come at some time and sit in the temple of God? Whose temple are we? A man of sin would sit in the midst of the Christian church, showing himself to be, as it were, God.

How does Paul know that? II Thessalonians 2:6—And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already working. —In Paul's day, he could see the beginning of the falling away already. He recognized that this would develop into a great apostasy from the faith.

II Thessalonians 2:8—Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the epiphania of his parousia.

Where is Paul getting this from? He's quoting directly from the prophecy in Daniel, chapter 7. Daniel 7:25 has already told us that he shall speak great words against the Most High, shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws. Daniel 7:26 —The judgment shall sit, they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end.

Compare II Thessalonians 2:8—Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall CONSUME and DESTROY, just as the prophet said. - 13-

That's where Paul got his information about the man of sin that is to come and pervert the Christian worship. That's where Paul got the idea about a great apostasy in Christianity that must come to pass, must develop, must prosper, must deceive many, and finally be consumed by the advent of our Lord. Paul got that by interpreting Daniel 7. He's quoting right from there.

This tells us that, when Daniel 7 is speaking of a time of 1260 years, the saints would be persecuted by this apostate system. Connect that with Paul's comments, that in the Christian church there would be a great falling away through the age, a great span of time when the saints would be persecuted. Then, finally, Christ would return, establish his Kingdom, raise the sleeping saints, and make them the new victors and the new rulers.

Unauthorized by Christ, the formal (erroneous) Christian church did begin to rule like a government (pictured by a beast in Revelation) on this earth. This was at the time of Justinian. In 538 A.D., the pope was given control of the city of Rome. He called himself papa, —father of all Christians, which was definitely prohibited by Jesus' words.

799- 1799 was the papal Millennium. Revelation 11:2 —The holy city (the church, the saints) shall they tread under foot forty- two months—1260 days. —I will give power to my two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments), and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, CLOTHED IN SACKCLOTH. — Sackcloth is worn in mourning. The Scriptures were laid low during the Dark Ages. It was fine to have the Scriptures written in Latin when Latin was the common language, but Latin died out as the common language, and now only scholars could read it.

The Reformers translated the Bible into common languages, but Bibles were still very costly, and there were still enemies who

didn't want people to read the Bible. Priests gladly told what they thought the Bible intended to say, but that had to suffice.

Re 11:7 —When they (the two witnesses) finish their testimony (of 1260 days), they're killed and lie in the street of the great city [where our Lord was crucified] (not the faithful, not the devoted, but the nominal element), lying in the city for three days and a half, and they're not even given the dignity of a public burial.

This shows the 3- 1/2 year period following this during which Christianity was formally abolished. This was in 1793. France was against the Catholic church, So it threw out all of Christianity. Things seemed bleak for Christianity. They had thrown the baby out with the bath water. —In 1803, they finally made a Concordat to re- establish Christianity. Revelation 11:11 —After three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. - 14-

Re 11:12 —And they heard a great voice from heaven saying, 'Come up hither.' And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

That's what occurred shortly after this resuscitation of the scriptures. Bible Societies sprung up and published Bibles by the millions.

Re 11:14 —The second woe is past; behold, the third woe comes quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.'

After 1799, after 3- 1/2 years, when the scriptures had very little impact, they (the two witnesses, the Old and New Testament) ascended to heaven (through the Bible societies). Bibles and Bible helps flooded the Christian world, with Concordances and Bible Dictionaries and Commentaries. Then, the next event that occurred was the decree that the authority of the Kingdom of Christ was taken. Now would begin the process of removing the old order and establishing the new.

The transition from the old age to the new Kingdom cannot take place until the time when the authority is given to Christ and he acts upon that authority. Now we see what happens after the

seventh trumpet sounds and the voices are say, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.

Re 11:18 —The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come. —All of the transitional phase of dislodging the traditional kingdoms follows that time, and leads finally to the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on the earth.

Da 2:44 corroborates this. The stone struck the image and destroyed the whole empire. When the stone strikes that image, and the image starts to crumble (it doesn't happen in a moment), we connect that scenario with the time of wrath in which Christ is dislodging the old kingdoms, in preparation of establishing his new Kingdom.

Recognizing that Daniel 10, 11 and 12 were all one prophecy, we turn to Daniel 12:4. —But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro (their eyes are traveling over the pages, studying), knowledge shall be increased (the prophecies of Daniel will be understood).

Da 12:9 —He said, 'Go thy way, Daniel: the words are closed and sealed till the time of the end. Many will be purified, and made white, and tried; the wicked shall do wickedly: the wise shall understand. —When will the wise understand?

Da 12:11 —From the time that the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the abomination set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. - 15-

The 1290 days (years) extend to the year 1829. Here and in Europe—here under William Miller, there under Thomas Wolfe—there was a remarkable movement. These prophetic students poured over these prophecies in Daniel. They came to realize that these prophecies had come to a fruition at the end of the French Revolution, with the power of papacy broken.

Da 12:12 —Blessed is he that waits, and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. —That would take us numerically to the year 1874 A.D. That was the time in history when things began to change radically. During the decade of the 1870s, more significant, fundamental inventions came into being than during any other decade before or since. That was the decade in which the incandescent light was discovered. That was the decade in which Maxwell's laws of electro- magnetics were formulated—which later led to Einstein's theory of relativity. That

date marks the springboard of all of the rise of technology which we have seen in our day.

All the major significant inventions to telecommunications—the telephone, the automobile—all date from this period in history. That decade produced the incipient stages of all the technological revolution for mankind. All started from that time. This period climaxes six millenniums of history for mankind. Having entered the seventh millennium, it is no wonder that things are beginning to dawn on this world in a remarkable, fresh, new way. No wonder that the trend of events has been so astonishingly different from that time forward. This prophecy takes us to the Time of the End, when finally the blessed would begin to understand the change of ages, the change of dispensations, and the incipient work of establishing that Kingdom.

This was also the decade that David Ben-Gurion cited as being the beginning of Israel being re-established in their homeland. The prophecy of Daniel gives us the last date point (1335 days = 1874 A.D.) and that is when all these momentous happenings began to happen. They started then, slowly, built up steam, and grew.

One of the problems about understanding the Book of Revelation is that it has not been distinguished that its prophecies occur over a whole history of time. It is too easy to fall into the error of thinking that the events all occur in a moment of time. Many prophetic studies make the mistake of trying to pin all prophetic testimony to one spot. For instance, the futuristic students of Revelation compress 21 chapters into a very short period of time, all in the future, and this misses many valuable lessons and facts.

Re 14:14, as an example, tells of the Lord coming on a cloud (figuratively), with a sickle in his hand, a crown on his head, returning to finish the work of the Christian era. The sickle is to reap, and the crown on his head to show that he is the new, appointed king for the next age. This shows Jesus' work in the Harvest of this age. He has the sickle to lay the groundwork for the Kingdom. - 16-

The Harvest is also the time of the climax and conclusion of the age.

We note that Revelation speaks of seven churches, seven seals, and seven trumpets. It is a common error to believe that the trumpets follow the seals which follow the churches. That is because the three visions of the same period are written consecutively, one

after the other. If they are written one after the other, one might think they occur one after the other. This does not work. It causes total confusion. There is no sense that can be made of this method.

These are three visions of the same period of time. They are not sequential, but contemporary. They are three different perspectives of the Christian Age.

The study of the churches, for instance, shows a history of the Christian church from the beginning to the end of the age: Ephesus, the first church, was commended for discerning the true apostles; Laodoea, the last church, was warned to listen for the knock of prophecy, and to open the door at the end of the age to understand the things now due. Each church between bears out the continuance in history, in its experiences.

When we look at the seals, and the four horses that opened the first four seals—they were white, red, then black, and then pale green in color (no life at all), showing how Christian doctrine faded through the Dark Ages. It started lucid, during the lives of the apostles. It turned red, showing the disputes that came into the church. Black refers to a period of famine—during the third seal there was scarcity of bread and nourishment—as Amos said, Scarcity for the word of the Lord. —The fourth seal was when there was almost no life at all in the church Papacy had just about ground down the saints and worn out the truth.

While the fifth trumpet sounded, Martin Luther was the star that came from the heavens and opened up the pit and freed the truth.

During the fifth seal, there were souls crying out for vengeance—souls that had been slain on the altar. These were martyrs who had to wait in death until the end of the age.

In Revelation 14, the Harvest began. Chapters 15, 16, 17 offer details concerning the details of the judgments of the Harvest. Chapter 20 introduced the Thousand Year Kingdom of Christ that will rule for the blessing of all.

Mt 24:29 agrees that the tribulation of those days is a span of time punctuated by a climax. We're in that span of time today. We have not reached the climax, but we expect it.

Mt 24:30 —Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they

shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

That's what illuminates the world of mankind to the fact that it is the power of Christ which they have seen exhibited all the time but didn't know it was he. Now they realize that is the power that has been behind it all along, and the power that is dissolving the old order and bringing in the new.

DAY 6, PART 2- ARMAGEDDON

DICK KINDIG: Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar, Session 7. We have now reached a subject that many people think about today. Armageddon. What is Armageddon? What does the Bible say about Armageddon? Is it a battle in Jerusalem? We are going to look at some background information. We are going to look at the symbols of Revelation and see that Armageddon is part of a much bigger picture. We are also going to look at something beautiful which follows it—the Kingdom of God on earth.

DAVID RICE: We have been talking about the various things that are happening at our end of the age, but we have not talked much about the climax. Now we're going to go to the climax the Armageddon episode itself, in the Book of Revelation.

Armageddon has been here in Revelation a long time, of course. But it was made popular in our nation when Teddy Roosevelt said, We are at Armageddon's door, or something like that. That brought to the people's mind the final end of this old order.

The name Armageddon appears in Revelation 16. That is during the Harvest of the Gospel Age, the Harvest of the Christian era. The Harvest is described between Chapter 14 and Chapter 19, and Chapter 16 fits right in there. It's the final transition from the old into the new Kingdom.

Re 16:16 tells of this place called Armageddon. Let us note the context of this scripture. He (God) gathered them into a place called in the Hebrew tongue 'Armageddon.'

Re 16:17 says, And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done.' That's the seventh vial. The vials are filled with the plagues which complete the wrath of God and end this old order. By the end of Chapter 16, you're done with the

plagues. Chapter 17 goes into another vision, to repeat something else about the judgment of the Great Harlot. —

This is similar to Chapters 1- 13 in this way: There, we had three pictures that went through the Gospel Age, all representing the same time, but showing different views of that time. So here. In Chapters 16, we have the plagues. Chapter 17, we have another view of the same episode from a different perspective. Chapter 18 and 19, likewise. Revelation does that.

That was true in Daniel 2,7,8,11; they were all about the same period of history. They weren't sequential; they were contemporary. In a way, they were repetitive.

Prophecy is repeated in different places So that we can fill in details by examining the whole network.

We will now be considering the Seven Last Plagues. Let us begin by reviewing what they are about. They are the judgments of God. Chapters 15 and 16 belong together. They form one complete narrative. Revelation 15:1 —And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. —That is the scene for these two chapters.

The trumpets are also the judgments of God. The trumpets are the judgments of God through the age, whereas the plagues are the judgments of God at the end of the age. There is an obvious parallel between these pictures. Let us see the point of this parallel.

As with a scientific experiment, we first gather the relevant facts; then we decide what the conclusion must be.

Re 8:2 —And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints. That proves that the trumpets began at the beginning of the age, when the prayers of saints began to be accepted by the Lord at that time.

Re 8:5 —And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire from the altar, and cast it into the earth. —The altar was the place for sacrifice. Are we to be sacrifices? Yes. Jesus was sacrificed. He was the Ransom. He laid down the price once for all, but he said, My followers are going to have to suffer with me. —Paul says

(Romans 12) that we should present our bodies as living sacrifices in the service of God.

The fire on the altar is intended to consume the sacrifice. Let us consider this interpretation: Taking the fire from the altar and casting it into the earth could well mean that this is the time when Christian sacrifice would be appropriate. That opportunity of suffering/dying with our Lord did not begin in Old Testament days. In the Old Testament, God promised Israel blessings in basket and in store if they were faithful. In the New Testament, God never promises that the Christian will be wealthy or wise by this world's standards. These are among the things we are to sacrifice.

The twelve apostles never became prosperous in this world's affairs. This is in contrast to the Prosperity Theology which teaches that if you're one of God's children, He will give you riches. This is the farthest thing from the truth. Look back at the noblest servants who have ever lived, and recognize the exact opposite.

That is why the fire being cast to earth seems to refer to the fiery trials of life which Jesus' followers experience and thus become a part of the Body of Christ.

Let us go through each of these trumpets. What symbol in each trumpet is being particularly affected?

Re 8:6 —The seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

What part of this old world was affected by this? Where were the hail and fire mingled with blood cast? On the earth. The first trumpet affected the earth.

Re 8:8 —The second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood. —What part of the old world was affected by this trumpet? The sea.

Re 8:10 —The third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. What is affected in this particular trumpet? The rivers.

Re 8:12 —The fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; So as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. —What is affected here? The heavens. And what is the biggest luminary in the heavens? The sun.

Re 9:2 —He opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. —What's affected here that hasn't been mentioned before? The air—the power of ecclesiastical control. Who was in charge of ecclesiastical power at this time?

In Revelation 8:10,11, where it speaks of a star, we think of Martin Luther as being the star of the Reformation. This was the time when Papacy was being upset. Papacy (the Beast of Revelation) was upset during the Reformation period.

Re 9:14 —Saying to the sixth angel which had the sixth trumpet, 'Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.' The River Euphrates was erupted, and great havoc ensued. It was the River Euphrates that was most affected here.

The sixth trumpet is So long in its scope that we go now to Revelation 11:15 —The seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.' —The outstanding thing about this trumpet was the voice. The great voice from heaven made this proclamation.

So the trumpets are defined by: (1) the earth, (2) the sea, (3) the rivers, (4) the sun, (5) the beast, and (6) the Euphrates, and (7) the voice.

The sixth trumpet was discussed in part of Chapter 9, all of 10, and part of 11. That was a most important trumpet.

Reviewing the trumpets, Revelation 8:7, speaking of the third part of trees being burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up, we equate with the demise of Judaism in 70 A.D.- 135 A.D.

Pagan Rome succeeded Judaism. Revelation 8:8 says there was a great mountain burning with fire cast into the midst of the sea. —

Fire represents God's judgments. A mountain, in prophecy, represents a kingdom.

What followed Pagan Rome in dominating the world? Papacy. Papal Rome became the replacement for Pagan Rome. Water represents refreshing truth. Revelation 22 tells of the river of life which, in the Kingdom, will go out to bless the whole world. Revelation 8:11 tells of bitter waters. —And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. —The waters of truth from the Gospel, which had been going out so sweetly from the beginning, now became bitter—not life-producing. The papal doctrines obscured the truth about Jesus' ransom. This was the time of the dimming, the corruption, of the Gospel.

In Revelation 8:12, it tells how the sunlight of the Gospel was darkened. This was just before the Reformation broke it open and allowed some sunbeams to enter again.

In Revelation 9:1, the Reformation saved the age from collapse. The Reformation gave the church a jolt of energy. It could now keep going to the end of the age, when it would be complete.

Re 9:14 takes us to the Euphrates, the time of the French Revolution. Here there was a great breakup of the people who had supported Papacy for so long. In 1789, when the French Revolution broke out, you couldn't have named a country that was more devastating to Papacy. France revolted against her mightily. The Reformation had carried on in Germany, and in England. It had gone into Czechoslovakia with Huss. There had been intense wars in many countries of Europe.

The place it was purged from, as nowhere else, was France. France had been almost totally Catholic. The Catholic church had so dominated and debilitated the country, the people just rose up and threw it off.

Finally, we see the reins of Christ's authority. He has taken authority, and is beginning to take down the old order and establish his Kingdom. Those are the Seven Trumpets.

Perhaps we should just review the reference to the Euphrates. Old Babylon sat on the Euphrates, the famous river of antiquity. Revelation 17 shows Papacy as the great whore instead of the

chaste Bride of Christ, which the church should be. She was the great whore who was defiled with all the kingdoms of this world.

Re 17:15 —The waters where the whore sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. —That seems to indicate that the waters represent the people who have been dominated by that great whore Papacy.

Re 17:5 says that this woman has a label on her head, MYSTERY. —Paul spoke of the mystery of iniquity that began to develop. Also, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. —The water represents the people who have been forced to be subordinate to the Papacy. The water is the River Euphrates. In France, that blew apart, and four angels and devastation and destruction were loosed from it.

Let us gather pertinent facts about the plagues by turning to Revelation 16:1 —I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.’ —

These seven angels remind us of the trumpets. The trumpets were introduced by seven angels standing before God, having seven trumpets ready to blow. Each one blew in sequence. Now seven angels have seven vials, ready to pour out, each one in sequence. These are the seven last plagues. We see a developing parallel between the trumpets through the age and the plagues at the end of the age.

This seems to say that God is going to wrap up the final judgment of this age in a way that corresponds to everything that has occurred down through the age.

Re 16:2 —The first angel went, and poured out his vial upon the earth. —The earth just like the trumpet.

Re 16:3 —The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea.

Re 16:4 —The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers.

Re 16:8 —The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun.

Re 16:10 —The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast. —We are following the words of the trumpets, as we follow the words of the vials. Earth, sea, river, sun, and now the beast.

His kingdom was full of darkness. It is air that is darkened. —The sun and the air were darkened in Revelation 9:2. Here (15:10), His kingdom was full of darkness. —One of the plagues in Egypt, preceding Israel's exodus from slavery there, was thick darkness. —They couldn't see a thing.

Re 16:12 —The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates.

Re 16:17 —The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven.

It is obvious that there is a parallel being made. Realizing that there is a connection between the trumpets through the age and the plagues at the end of the age, a comparison will help us to understand one part that may not be as clear alone. If a message in the study of the plagues seems confusing, go back to the study of the trumpets and see if that is clearer and could be inserted into the plague study to make it more clear. It's almost like a jigsaw puzzle, studying prophecy. We work out one part, and it helps us to work out another part. Clues and patterns from one portion help us fill things into another portion of the prophecy.

Re 16:16 —He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. —This is not the end. It is not Plague Seven. Plague Seven happens after they're gathered. That would mean that the gathering together comes in the Sixth Plague before the final collapse. Then, when they're gathered, they have the battle.

Re 16:14 —They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. — There is going to be a battle ensuing at Armageddon. **THIS IS HIGHLY SYMBOLIC.** Don't look for Armageddon or the Hill of Megiddo on a map and say, That's where the armies will be. — That's not the way Revelation works. We don't expect a literal angel to pour out a bowl of a mysterious fluid called a plague. **THIS IS ALL SYMBOLIC.**

Why is the term Armageddon used at all? Armageddon is the Hill of Megiddo. The Hill of Megiddo was the battle ground for many ancient battles of Israel.

Megiddo was in the Valley of Jezreel. Ahab and Jezebel met their doom in the Valley of Jezreel. Gideon was in the Valley of Jezreel, as were Barak and Deborah. The ancient battle field of old is emblematic of the final, climactic battle at the end of this age.

There's more than a battle involved in the Battle of Armageddon. Revelation 16:17 —The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple, saying, 'It is done.' And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, So mighty an earthquake, and So great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the city (the Sinaitic Manuscript has this singular, not plural) of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Golf- ball sized hailstones seem huge to us. These are hundred-pound hailstones. There is great force to this symbol. They would cause incredible destruction. That's the final climax of the old world.

Re 16:19 —This city is the city of Babylon. —The great city was divided into three parts. Then it fell, and was destroyed. First, there was a battle. Then there was an earthquake. An earthquake represents a social upheaval, a revolution. Back in the sixth trumpet, there was an earthquake that described the French Revolution. In that earthquake, one- tenth of the city fell. What city? Babylon—Christendom—Papacy and her great domain. In the image of Daniel, this was divided into ten toes and ten horns. One- tenth of that fell during the French Revolution.

Here, in Revelation 16:19, it does not say that a tenth of the city falls. It says the city of the nations fell. —It was destroyed. That happened in the earthquake. We had a battle and then an earthquake.

Chapter 17 speaks of Babylon as a woman. In the history of the fourth church, Revelation 2:18, we were before the time of the Reformation. That was the darkest period of the Dark Ages. This was the worst time for the church during the age. Verse 19—I know your works, and your charity, and service, and faith—you're

doing as well as you can. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee because you suffer that woman Jezebel, which calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit (spiritual) fornication, and (spiritually) to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Who was Jezebel? Jezebel was the wife of wicked King Ahab. Jezebel was a foreigner. She was not Jewish. Jezebel was the daughter of the King of Tyre. In Ezekiel, the king of Tyre is a picture of Satan himself. Jezebel represents that daughter of Satan who comes into the kingdom of Israel, becomes the queen, and rules with the power of the king.

That's just what happened to Papacy. Papacy in that Mystery of Iniquity which is developed through the age. It is the child of the Adversary, not of Christ. She's inter-bred into the Christian community. Where does Papacy get its strength? It gets its strength from its partner, the powers with whom it is allied, the governments. Ahab, historical Jezebel's husband, represents the strength of the kings that gave the power to Papacy through the age.

How did Ahab and Jezebel finally meet their end? They met their end in two separate situations not at one time. Ahab went out on the field of battle (I Chronicles 18:33) and he died there. That suggests that, when the final conflagration comes, the powers that have supported Christianity—that have supported the false church through the age—will die on the field of battle. They are the armies of strength. Armageddon is first a battle, and secondly it's the earthquake, a social upheaval.

Jezebel died in the city, later on. She was thrown out by her own eunuchs. The dogs ate her. She was dead. She died in the city; Ahab died in the field of battle. Armageddon is both a battle and an earthquake because it represents both part of the destruction. First there will be a battle—literally a battle—somewhere. After that, Jezebel will be eaten up in the city, in the social revolution which follows.

Re 16:19 —The great city was divided into three parts. —What three parts?

Let's notice what happens in Plague Six. Revelation 16:12 —The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and the beast and the false prophet.

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which gather the kings of the world to the battle of that great day.

The beast is the same beast as the one in Revelation 13—Great Papacy. The false prophet makes his appearance here for the first time, but it is essentially the same as the two-horned beast. That is particularly shown in Revelation 19. Now we have two religious systems represented—the Papacy and the Protestant systems.

Then we have the dragon—the old master Satan and his control over the governments. The three are (1) Papacy, (2) Protestantism, and (3) the governments. They all join together for support.

What would induce them to lean on each other for support? Whatever would cause that to happen? It has to be some crisis that will occur, that will precipitate a moment of weakness on these parties. They will feel that, to keep society in order, they are going to have to join forces and come together. Some may think of this as a strong coalition, but they are weak when they come together. So the combination would be weak, too. When Armageddon strikes, this coalition of three parties is broken apart. That is why the Great City is split into three parts. They are the three parts that came together in Plague Number Six.

When the battle strikes, where does it occur? (After that, the earthquake comes.)

In Revelation 14:19, we have a similar symbology about the last episode that finishes this old world. —The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

And the winepress was trodden outside the city, the blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of 1600 furlongs. —There is certainly much symbology here.

There will not really be 1600 furlongs of blood, but $1600 = 40 \times 40$. Forty years is used in the Bible as a period of testing, trial, judgment, proving. Judgment times judgment means a full measure of retributive judgment. Life is being poured out of the old system.

The treading of the winepress of the wrath of God occurs outside of the city. Christendom, in this picture, is gathered outside of the city of Babylon, and that's where they meet their end.

Joe 3:1 —Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem—that's today. God has brought back the captivity of Israel and Jerusalem. They're back in their land again, as a restored nation since 1948.

At that time, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.

There is some judgment that God is going to hold over the nations.

He's going to do this at Israel, where they have been re-gathered. It's a punishment upon the nations for having treated Israel so poorly. It is true that Israel had to be afflicted because of their iniquity in crucifying their Messiah. But the nations have gone overboard in their persecution. Now they have to pay retributive judgment for that.

Joe 3:9 —Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; 'Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near.

The UN takes the scripture, Beat your swords into plowshares and your spears into pruning hooks. —Joe 3:10 is the opposite: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hoods into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. —This is preparing for war.

Joe 3:11 —Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither (to this place) cause thy mighty ones to come down.

Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

That's where the judgment is going to fall upon the nations of Christendom. They'll be gathered to the Middle East, to re-gathered Israel.

Joe 3:13 —Put in the sickle, the harvest is ripe: the press is full, the fats are overflowing; their wickedness is great. Multitudes and multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is

near in the valley of decision. Joel 3:15 —The sun and the moon shall be darkened, the stars withdraw their shining. —This is similar to what we read in Matthew 24. It means the final, utter collapse. That's what's going to happen here. This is the final treading down of the nations that are assembled at Israel.

Joe 3:16 —The LORD shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people.

Joe 3:18 —And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop new wine, the hills shall flow with milk, all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD. Egypt shall be a desolation, Edom a wilderness, because they have done violence against Judah.

Joe 3:20 —But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the LORD dwelleth in Zion.

All of this is carrying many implications about what is going on in this transition.

He's gathering all nations to Israel who have been re-gathered to their land. There He will hold judgment over them. After that judgment, a tremendous blessing is prefigured by the new wine, the flowing with milk, the rivers. Blessing and refreshment will emanate from Israel, going abroad to the other nations.

After the Battle of Armageddon, the blessing comes. God only chastises the world to remove the wickedness, and then to bless. It's like a doctor whose patient has a very bad infection. He has to lance the wound, drain it, amputate if necessary, So that he can heal and nurture and cleanse and rebuild.

That's what God is doing in this old world. Throughout Armageddon, He's wiping away the surface So that He can rebuild His Kingdom on the ruins of the old. It's more than just righteous indignation. It's preparing for the blessing of those in the Peaceable Kingdom of Righteousness.

Zechariah 12 tells what is happening during this last debacle, from Israel's point of view. It explains why Israel is the point of attention for this last debacle of Armageddon.

Zec 12:3 —And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: everyone that burdens themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. —They will be hurt. Israel will not.

We see the formative stages of that today. In 1948, everybody was for Israel. There was a great sympathy for the Jews because of the Holocaust. Today, it's not the same. The news media feels they give an equal report, regardless of how bad one side is or how good the other side is. Because of this, Israel is receiving much undue criticism. Their posture is reasonable. But people are getting to be more and more against Israel. In the present negotiations to have the Jews give up Jerusalem, a political hot spot will result unless the Jews do that. It could well be that the people of the world will take an adamant position against Israel.

Zec 12:7 —The LORD shall save the tents of Judah first ... In that day the LORD shall defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... It will come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

This is what we saw in Joel, the 3rd chapter. They're all gathered there in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and then God judges and condemns and destroys those nations that have come upon them. That's where the treading of the wine press takes place.

Zec 12:10 —And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications (prayer):

And they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Zec 12:12 —The land shall mourn, every family apart. —It goes on to talk all about their mourning.

Why are they mourning, if God has just rescued them? Why aren't they rejoicing? Because their hearts are broken when they come face to face with the fact that the one who is saving them is the Messiah they resisted and put to death 2000 years ago. Now their hearts are going to be humbled.

They will recognize in prayer what a terrible thing they have done—how for 2000 years they have had stony hearts over the issue. They will be thoroughly repentant. Then, the blessings of

God can really begin, flowing from Israel. God cannot use them until then. They must be humble, humiliated, sorrowful, regretful, mournful. They weep as one would weep for the loss of his firstborn. They will realize the opportunities they have missed.

Zec 14:3 —Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought for them in days of old—for Israel.

His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem which on the east. —A mountain represents a kingdom. The Mount of Olives is the mount of light and peace. That's where Christ is going to establish his rule in the earth. (This is not literal. This is symbolic.)

The mountain cleaves in the midst—half to the north, half to the south. This Kingdom has two parts to it. The church in glory will be the spiritual phase of the Kingdom, and Israel will be on earth with her resurrected prophets of old, to lead them through the difficulties. That will be the established Kingdom on earth.

Zec 14:8 ends the way that Joel ended. —In that day, living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (the Dead Sea), and half of them to the Mediterranean Sea: in summer and in winter it shall be.

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day there shall be one LORD, and His name one. —That's not today. Today, we have Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Mohammedism, Paganism. They don't all recognize God. —In that day there shall be one God, one LORD, one Name, one hope. Satan will be bound. The truth will become clear. It won't happen in a moment. It is a Thousand- Year Kingdom that accomplishes this.

This is a time of probation for the people.

Zec 14:16 —It will come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem—they'll have to go to worship the Lord at Israel.

Zec 14:17 —If they don't, upon them there shall be no rain. — They shall receive no benefits, no blessings, unless they acknowledge the Lord's hand in Israel.

Zec 14:18 —If the family of Egypt go not up— they have no rain, anyway. Then, there shall be the plague to smite them.

There will be inducements for people to recognize Israel's position and come up for a blessing. This won't be easy. Has there ever been a race among men that has been more maligned, more oppressed? Over 2000 years, the Jews have suffered from anti-Semitism grossly.

In the Kingdom, there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. One of the most unjust will be Hitler. When he comes back from the grave, and he realizes that the Kingdom is in Israel, he will not only feel very sheepish—it will be very difficult for him.

All the world will have to humbly recognize the hand of God in Israel, just as Israel will have to humbly recognize their great travesty in persecuting their own Messiah. Everybody will be humbled. Humility will be the first step necessary in coming back to godliness. All will have to rid themselves of their own pride and deceitful heart, and accept the benefit of righteousness from the Lord's hand.

Zec 8:22 is another prophecy which parallels the same time. It is expressing the same thing in different words: Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, and say, 'We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.' As the nations begin to observe the blessings of the Kingdom, they will gradually come up and say, We'd like to share that.

All the saints will be in heaven at this time, ruling from heaven, while the world of mankind begins to wake up to the opportunities of life that they have obviated and bypassed for So long.

That's what Armageddon will bring. That's after Armageddon. That's the purpose of Armageddon. Armageddon isn't to incinerate everybody. It's to purge the world of evil So the campaign of righteousness can begin.

What precipitates this struggle of Armageddon?

It's precipitated by the drying up of the River Euphrates. The River Euphrates was the life blood of great Babylon. Without the River Euphrates, there would have been no trade, no commerce, no city, no empire. There would have been nothing. It was the River Euphrates that caused it all.

Some scriptures are very clear. We have no doubt about what they mean. Other scriptures are not as clear, and we should reason on them with that in mind. We are presently going to consider some possibilities that seem logical, but they are not as definite in their interpretation as other scriptures are.

If the River Euphrates is the life- blood of the Western world of Christendom, then it seems possible that a down- turn in the economy of the Western world could precipitate the crisis we are studying.

Where are we today, in the history of what's been going on in recent years? We have seen the collapse of Communism in just the last decade. When Communism collapsed, it left only one competing system—Capitalism. Japan is having its problems, but the West is doing well. People are pinning their hopes on Capitalism.

Capitalism works well because it has a strong motive behind it. In the Kingdom, there will be the motivation of love. Today, that is not a powerful motivation. Today, the motivation is greed and selfishness. It works. It does its job.

Imagine if capitalism finally begins to collapse. If it erodes and totters, man's last hope is gone. Communism fell. If capitalism goes, the situation will be serious.

In the '20s and '30s, there was a Depression in the Western world—especially in the United States—that was very severe. At that time, there was a social fabric in the back of the country a moral fabric—that kept society together somewhat. That fabric has been rotting for the last few decades. If we have another downturn of that sort, and now we only have a rotting social fabric, it might bring a great tottering to the old stability of the old world.

The Beast (Papacy), the False Prophet (Protestantism), and the governments would have to lean together for support. They would have to unify in some kind of coalition, to keep people together. From that, they precipitate an action to intervene in Israel. That's where God will judge them, and all will collapse.

Once their armies are broken, their power is broken in the Middle East. Back home, the great earthquake would well up. Remember, Armageddon is first a battle, and then an earthquake, a revolution. All the authorities that had tried to maintain the old order—the great city is split in three component parts—great Babylon comes

to receive the fury of God's wrath. It will be trodden down, as Jezebel was.

Babylon would be vanquished. The still, small voice will then speak from Israel. God is establishing something better.

What could possibly cause such a down- turn today? Now we are straying farther from the positive assurances of Scripture. Now we are using our common sense. It may be right or it may be wrong.

The market has been going up because we have this Baby Boom generation that has been pushing money into the market. Economists are concerned. They liken this to a pig going into a python. There will be a down- side of the bump. Now, the Baby Boomers are putting away savings for their older years, but eventually they will withdraw their savings and there won't be enough of a population to replace them and their money. This could cause a major down- turn in the financial structure.

Some believe the developing nations could come in to invest. But there is a strong possibility that this down- turn could cause the withdrawal of the financial support of the old world.

Enough speculation. There is So much that is sure in Scripture.

In Revelation 16, we look at what happens before the Sixth Plague. Has Plague Number Five occurred yet? Revelation 16:10 —The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast. —That beast we know. That beast is Papacy from Chapter 13.

Re 16:10 —The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of Papacy; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. — This was the time of the Reformation. The Reformation was a great problem, a great plague against Papacy.

The Seven Last Plagues were the seven last plagues that freed the Israelites from their bondage back in the Book of Exodus. The second from the end, which correlates with the plague we've been studying in Revelation, is found in Exodus 10. It is the Plague of Locusts, which came upon Egypt and ate up every green thing.

Ex 10:13 —Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and

all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts.

And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts, neither after them shall be such.

For they covered the face of the whole earth, So that the land was darkened. —There's that darkening again.

They did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left:

Ex 10:16 —Then Pharaoh called for Moses; and said, 'I have sinned. Forgive me. Take away from me this plague.

Ex 10:19 —The Lord turned a mighty strong west wind, which pushed the locusts back where they'd come from cast them into the Red Sea; and there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, So that he would not let the children of Israel go.

This is the plague that correlates to the plague in Revelation, on the Beast, on Papacy.

Does this have any application to contemporary time?

Eastern and Central Europe was a Catholic stronghold, much more than Western Europe. What happened after World War II? There was an influx of Communism into Middle and Central Europe that was a severe plague upon Papacy. All their stronghold lands were now occupied by an atheist power.

What's happened since that time? In the 1980s, we have seen a strong wind of Western culture push that back. John Paul is encouraged that atheism is being pushed back. This has been the accomplishment of Plague Five. Armageddon is still ahead of us; that's Plague Seven. But the gathering to Armageddon is something contemporary with us. We do not know positively how long it will take. Maybe it will be another decade. We will keep looking.

Everything about the Kingdom is for the healing of the nations. This old world hasn't seen one-half of the mercy and grace of God. He hasn't made it clear yet to them because He's still calling out those elect few who will compose the Bride of Christ.

This is a very special call. If you have heard the call to discipleship, to be part of the Bride of Christ, it's a call that will never be repeated after this age is closed. It is a glory and an honor and an exaltation that is almost unthinkably wonderful.

It does require of us, as Christian people, if we accept that call to full devotion, it requires sacrifice and suffering. As Paul says, in Romans 6:3, As many as have been baptized into Jesus, into Christ, have been baptized into his death. —No wonder Paul says, If you suffer with him, you will reign with him. If you deny him, he'll deny you.

No wonder the prophecy of Revelation says, If you're faithful unto death, I will give you a crown of life. —No wonder Jesus said, The love of many will wax cold, but he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved. —No wonder Paul admonished us in this evil day, to put on the whole armor of God that we might stand. —We have to be peaceable, righteous, clean of character, clean of heart, as much as possible developing our character into the likeness of Christ our example.

As Romans 12 says, we have to be transformed in our characters to be like our example. That's one reason Christ came in the flesh—to be an example we can see, hear about, read about his history, his actions, his conduct, and see the character that he manifested. This is the example of what we must become as we are transformed. After all, if we really expect to receive the promise—to be made Kings and Priests in Heaven, to reign with Christ—we'd better have characters suited to that condition. What a misfit, if we didn't have characters that were mete for that kind of glory.

God is going to test us thoroughly. That is why, during this night time of sin, before the introduction of the Kingdom, God has taken 2000 years to gather out one here, one over there, to test, purge, try, and develop them. They will be the jewels in the crown of our Lord, the Bride of Christ. It is a VERY SPECIAL honor.

If we don't grasp the fact that He's going to turn His mercy to the whole world of mankind, after the Kingdom opens, then we might assume that being of the Bride of Christ is assured as long as we're not So bad, as long as we're not a terrible person. That is dead wrong. This prize is not a situation we inherit by not being too bad. It's a call that we receive to be transformed So that we can be an imitation of the character of Christ. The Christian has to labor and struggle through the experiences of life in order to manifest the

disposition of Christ insofar as possible, So that we will be prepared for the rich body, the spiritual body, the reward in heaven that is the inheritance of the saints.

In Revelation 22, we have this river going out. Revelation 22:3 — There will be no more curse: the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; his servants shall serve him: They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. —That's what mankind is going to receive if they're obedient during the Thousand Years.

Re 21:2 —Here we see another vision, as we often see repetitive visions in the Book of Revelation. —I John saw the holy city. — We remember that, in Chapter 11, the holy city was downtrodden for 42 months. Now, the holy city, the new Jerusalem (not Babylon, the unchaste woman) but the chaste, virgin bride of Christ—the new Jerusalem.

I saw her coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, he will dwell with them, they shall be his people, God shall be with them ...

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'

He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' What a lovely, lovely promise.

After the Bride of Christ is complete, in all the glory of character which we are admonished to put on, then the New Jerusalem, the new city, the new government for earth, will come down and all nations will come in and have their blessings (if they will become obedient; it is always conditional).

To those, God says, I will wipe away all tears, all pain, all death, no more curse. —What a beautiful, glorious provision.

God cared enough to give His only Son, and it is certainly compatible that He will do all in His power—short of transgressing against the free will of His creatures—to rescue and redeem and uplift them in this Kingdom.

We see the gates of the city, in Revelation 21:12- 21. The gates are gates like pearls.

Re 21:24 —The nations shall walk in the light of it: the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. The gates shall not be shut at all by day: They shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles nor works abomination—only those that correct their ways and receive humbly the instruction of the Kingdom, and repent. Only they will receive the blessings of this Kingdom.

There will be a test, but this time, when Adam is called back from the grave, he will have enough experience to pass his test. So will all the billions of people who have lived and died for 6000 years. They've been learning something during the anguish of this old world. They've been learning first- hand what it means to rebel against God and to suffer the consequences of sin, of death and corruption.

It has not been a pretty picture: wars, famines, hostilities, prejudices, anger. For 6000 years, the old world has been corrupted by all of this which is the natural influence of sin and death.

With that lesson fully learned, do you think Adam will make a better decision?

Do you think that Adam in the garden, if he had known what it really entailed, might have acted differently? He probably would have.

Now, because of God's grace, everyone who received life from Adam—that's all of us—benefit from the fact that Christ has given his life to rescue Adam, and all life descended from Adam is now redeemed in Christ as well.

When the whole world comes back to life in the Kingdom—all because of the one sacrifice of Christ—as Paul said, By one man, sin entered the world and death by sin, So by one man (the sacrifice of our Lord, redeeming the life of Adam) everyone who shares Adam's life can come back from the grave.

There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. —When the unjust return, they will have had their experience with sin. Now they will need another experience. Now

God will show them, This is what it's going to be like if you're obedient. —

As far as they're obedient, they'll have in proportion blessings accruing to them. They will see about them the obedient being blest with health, life, vigor, comeliness. They will therefore be induced to follow that example and to walk up the Highway of Holiness to become sons of God themselves. What a beautiful opportunity!

Then, at the end of the Thousand Years, when Satan is loosed out from his prison, they will receive THE test. They have had a whole life- time of sin, they will have a whole experience with righteousness. Which will they prefer? Would they rather return to sin and die, or would they rather be obedient and live forever with the perfect glory that God has for them?

The choice is So clear and obvious. Almost everyone will push for the righteous. Everyone will not. There will be some ungodly. There will be some cutting off. —

In the beginning, Satan was not created to be a Deceiver. He was created as a free, moral agent who could choose as he wished. This was also true of all the angels. Many of them chose to remain faithful. Some of the deflected. When Satan and those angels chose the evil way, it was because of their personal choice against what was right.

When mankind comes back in the Kingdom, the one thing they will always have inviolate is the will, the ability, to choose. They will always be free, moral agents to choose their own way. It is almost incomprehensible that some will choose the wrong way. This is what the Scriptures say. Revelation 20: When Satan is let loose again, by God—to provide a test—Re 20:7 When the Thousand Years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

Re 20:8 —And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, God and Agog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was judged as well.

That's the climax. That's the consummation. God says, Choose life, that you may live. —If you don't, you won't live. That's the proposition. That's what He told Adam. —The day that you eat thereof and disobey, dying you will die. —The wages of sin is death. —

God will not comport to continue the blessings of life everlasting to any of the ungodly, after So much provision has been made. It's their power to choose.

When we read Revelation 20:8 —The number of whom is as the sand of the sea—we wonder, Are there going to be So many disobedient at the end of the Kingdom that their number will be as vast as the sand of the sea? —It might be interpreted that there will be such a large population in the Kingdom that even a small percentage of them would be a large number. But it might be referring to Satan going out to deceive the nations, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. —God had said to Abraham, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven (spiritual), and as the sands of the seashore (the whole world of mankind). —It may be that Satan goes out to deceive the whole world of mankind, who are as the sands of the seashore. This would not mean he was successful with the majority.

It seems reasonable that a small remnant will choose the wrong, and the vast majority will choose the good.

So far, of the billions who have lived on this earth, few have received the message of Christ with sincerity, and have had that seed dwell in their hearts and have prospered, and have become disciples in character- likeness of Christ. They have been a tiny fraction of earth's billions.

When God intended the creation of mankind, He had much better in mind than that. He's not the savior of a few and the loser of almost everybody. He is the savior of the world, especially of those who believe now. Jesus is not merely our Redeemer, but the Redeemer of the whole world.

I John 2:2 mentions this precise point—He is the propitiation for our sins: —What a blessed truth! Without that, the blood of Christ on our behalf, we have no standing before God. —And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

What a blessed, blessed hope! Not Just us, but Justice for all. Redemption for every man, woman, and child who has ever lived.

Wicked Judah was worse than Sodom. God will bring them all back—Sodom, Judah, Samaria. You will be ashamed of yourself, but nevertheless I will make my covenant with you, and you will be used to help the others to be recovered. You will be a comfort to them. They will say, ‘We didn’t do as badly as you did.’ That will make them feel better. —(Ezekiel 16:47,51- 54,60,61)

Jesus said to the Jews of his day, When Nineveh was spared, Jonah was there to give them a sign. There is among you One very much greater than Jonah, and you don’t even receive his testimony. It will be easier for the Ninevites in the day of judgment than for you. In the day of judgment, they will all have an opportunity, even as you will. Those who haven’t transgressed as much will have an easier way. —(Luke 11:30,32; Matthew 12:41)

If you dig a ditch down a hundred feet, you’re going to have to crawl a hundred feet out. Present character DOES make a difference. Those who have sinned a little, will have a little way to crawl back to the divine likeness. Those who have abrogated every feature of righteousness in this life, and sinned blatantly, and corrupted their characters—they will come back as they went down. Ecclesiasties 11:3 —As a tree falleth, So shall it lie until the resurrection. They will have accrued—in their bodies, inherently, in their characters, in their minds, their compositions, their personalities—all the wickedness they have accomplished in this life. That is how they will approach the Kingdom.

God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows, that shall he reap. — (Galatians 6:7) Christ died for all, So all will come back in the Kingdom. That’s a wonderful privilege. But every man will return with his old character. The experiences of the Kingdom can help him remove his sin, but there will be no easy road for a sinner who has been belligerent in this life. He is going to have to labor hard to crawl back to the divine likeness.

But there will be an opportunity—for wicked Judea—for the Jews who castigated our Lord. There will be a full opportunity then, IF they will claim it.

Armageddon is temporary. After it is past, the world can look back and praise the Lord Who, as a surgeon cuts away all that is diseased, will remove all iniquity, and establish on the ruins of the worldly kingdoms, His Peaceable Kingdom of Righteousness. Armageddon introduces a Kingdom So wonderful that, in the

aftermath of Armageddon, mankind will find the answer to all their needs. May the Lord be praised!

DAY 6, PART 3—THE MAN OF SIN

DICK KINDIG: Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar. Many modern Christians do not spend much time studying Bible prophecy. Among those who do, the futurist view (which has been popularized by Hal Lindsay and others) seems to be the dominant viewpoint. In this session, David Rice will look at those theories and see how they compare with the presentation David has been making for the last seven sessions.

The interesting thing is that the viewpoint that David presented was very popular in the mid- 19th century, but it has not been commonly held for the last hundred years. David will explain that, and also how some of these theories can be harmonized and some don't harmonize at all; you have to choose, based on the Scriptures. Study it, prove it yourself.

DAVID RICE: We've been talking a great deal about the fulfillment of prophecy during the Dark Ages of the Christian era. Prophecy predicted that there would be a falling away, and there would be a recovery. It's almost as though God wanted to make His testimony that the spirit of Christ would be victorious through all odds and against all opponents. By his spirit, he would be able to accomplish his purpose of calling out the few, the Little Flock, the Elect of God—no matter what the circumstances

To the Fifth Church at Sardis, he said, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. You're almost gone, practically obliterated. Then the Reformation broke it open, and began a surge back to the right way.

We are now going to deal with how contemporary Christians sometimes have a little different perspective on some of these issues. What happened to cloud the situation? Contemporary Christians tend to think of the futurist view of Revelation. We prefer the historical view.

To some extent, what happened in Christendom 150- 200 years ago (when they began to awaken to the understanding of some of the prophecies of Daniel which we've been studying) was a real shot in the arm for the Christian world. Since then, there's been a retrenchment away from these views. There are a couple of reasons for that.

One reason is that, in 1844 after the Miller movement developed, the expectation of the Lord's return had been such a spectacular hope and broad- spread movement and such an intense expectation, the letdown caused many to discard the whole concept. Unfortunately, many discarded the baby with the bath water. — Rather than re- examining and re- focusing prophecies, many threw it all away.

They returned to some concepts that had been published as a part of the Counter- Reformation Movement.

Imagine that you were a good Roman Catholic pope, or bishop, or cardinal, during the Reformation when Martin Luther was saying Papacy was the anti- Christ. The Reformers didn't agree on everything, but they agreed that Papacy was the anti- Christ. They knew that the Catholic church was the Man of Sin. If someone were to say this today, most listeners would feel it was a radical judgment. It would not be politically correct.

In the King James Bible, there is a Preface, a dedication to King James. It states something that was current, acceptable, and common knowledge at the time this version was published. Today, not all King James Bibles include this preface. It is not politically acceptable. Most of the preface goes on and on and on in praise of King James; it was written by a subject of King James. Then, it says:

This contentment (that of Your Majesty's loyal and religious people) doth not diminish or decay, but every day increaseth and taketh strength, when they observe that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of Christendom, by writing in defense of the Truth (which hath given such a blow unto that Man of Sin as will not be healed.)

This, of course, is not a proof that the Catholic Church is the Man of Sin, but it does express a prevailing, common, accepted viewpoint in the Protestant world hundreds of years ago. It was little disputed. It was matter- of- fatly accepted and acknowledged.

Today it's different. As the Reformation progressed, the Catholic scholars had to do something against this application. The heat was getting too high; it was a little uncomfortable. Criticism against Papacy was rampant and abroad in the Protestant world.

I understand (this is not a deeply- studied part of my research) that there were two priests in the Catholic church. Their names were Bellarmine and Ribera. Each of them, studious, desired to deflect the allegations. They chose opposite views to do this: one taught that all was fulfilled in 70 A.D. —the preterit view; the other taught the futurist view—Revelation is future, and these things have not yet come to pass. This latter view states that the Man of Sin is a single individual who will come and say (for 3- 1/2 years or maybe 7 years), I am God.

Either way, they denied that Papacy was the Man of Sin.

What would induce a Protestant to accept either view? Probably we all want to accept the Word of God just as it is. We don't want to tear it apart, find fault, criticize. We want to accept it just as it is. Next we are tempted to say, These things are written as symbols, but they are actual. We might get away from symbolical interpretation where symbolism is absolutely necessary.

When Revelation talks about a beast with ten horns, very few people think there really is a beast with ten horns. What about 3- 1/2 times? Could that really be 3- 1/2 literal years? It might be appealing. It is easier to take it literally than to figure what it means symbolically.

Add to that, the day- for- a- year concept didn't materialize as anticipated, the whole concept has a stigma attached to it because of failed expectations. The prophecies which used a day for a year are fundamental, basic. Wycliffe understood the concept, though imperfectly. He was not living in the Time of the End when prophecy would be made clear. God had sealed these truths, and it was too early to anyone to understand them. (Daniel 12:9) Even Paul could not understand the timing of the End visions.

The view of Papacy being the Man of Sin has faded away, and other theories have emerged which are not based on solid foundation.

It is not profitable to tear down. It is profitable to build up. Yet we must understand what other Christians believe about a Seven- Year Rapture. Many conscientious Christians talk about a 3- 1/2 years end experience. Another phrase is a Seven- Year Tribulation. — This thought is taken from Daniel 9:25. This scripture speaks of 69 weeks, and some Christians have to do something with the 70th week. Therefore, they skip about 2000 years from Jesus coming in

his First Advent to seven years at the end of the Gospel Age, feeling that the troublous times are those last seven years.

When we wrestle with prophecy, we try many possibilities. But the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25 was 458 B.C., and the 490 years (70 weeks) take us to the death of Messiah on the cross, all of the 70 weeks have been used. There is no week—seven years—remaining, to be assigned somewhere else. The destruction and desolation of Daniel 9:26 and 27 refer to the First Advent.

They were devastating abominations. The First Trumpet of Revelation told about the destruction of Judaism. These prophecies were fulfilled. They applied at the end of the Jewish age. It is important to place the fulfillment of scripture in the Gospel era or in the Kingdom era or in the transition of the ages. This gives us a framework that makes sense. It is reasonable.

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The 3- 1/2 years comes from the concept of the midst of the week. —If seven years is left over to be assigned at The End, then 3- 1/2 years would have to be assigned there, also. The problem, again, is not acknowledging that this was complete, fulfilled and finished with Christ at the First Advent.

We usually begin looking at a prophecy and get an over- all thought. We compare it with other prophecies, and ask ourselves, Does it fit? Does it mesh?

Then we examine the facts. In this case, we examine the facts of dating—when Jesus was born, when he was baptized, when he died on the cross. Facts are not fluid. Cold, hard facts lock down the dates of history.

If we just read Daniel 2 or Daniel 7, we might gain an impression, and go almost anywhere with it. Imagination may be interesting, but there's no substance to it. Daniel himself explains many things that keep us on track—facts. We don't have to guess.

God wants us to piece it all together with observation, study, and examination. If the Bible were written So every man, woman, and child would understand it easily, there would be no test to see which were eager and anxious to know God's plan—enough to put forth effort to learn it. It requires our diligence.

Mt 13:52 —Then said he unto them, ‘Therefore every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.’ That is our privilege. Everyone of us who is instructed about the Kingdom of Heaven has the privilege of dipping into the storehouse—the Bible—bringing out old truths that are precious and revered, and new truths that become due to be understood as the progress of ages and events makes them apparent.

If Daniel’s prophecies were not to be understood until the End of the Age, how would they be understood? There was not to be another apostle come with inspired authority to explain. The understanding could only come to good, solid Christian people with concern, viewing the affairs transpiring, looking at the pages of Holy Writ, and trying to match the prophecy to the facts. This is doing what Jesus said would be the privilege of all the saints—to examine, to study, to ferret out the precious promises with their application.

Built on the sureness of positive facts and prophecy, it is not wrong to think further. But we must always remember which is which—possibility, probability, or definite sureness. We should respect others who do not agree with us—respect their views—interchange and dialog—always working toward the understanding of what God’s mind is on a matter.

- 5-

Mt 13:52 certainly hints that there are things in God’s Word which scribes should understand. The 13th chapter of Matthew gives seven parables of the Kingdom. —Seven is a very special number in Scripture.

Mt 13:3 —And he (Jesus) spake many things unto them in parables, saying, ‘Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them:

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

And when the sun was risen up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, an hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. —There's a lesson involved there: We have to have hearts that are good soil, So that when we hear the message of the Word of the Lord it can take root and not just pass away. We're not just to find it exciting for a moment, and then as the year passes we go back to secular pursuits.

It has to instill in our hearts, and bring forth Christian character and nobility of thought, cleanliness of mind and of heart, So that we walk after the pattern of Christ. That's the lesson of the parable.

It's interesting that there's a time notation in this parable, too. It's about sowing the good seed. There's a deep lesson of Christian involvement in each of the seven parables. And there's a note of time in each of them. If we want to place the context of this parable into the Christian era somewhere, we would choose to put it in the First Church. That's when the sowing work of the early movement of the Christian Age began. That's when Jesus sent his disciples out to sow abroad the seed of the Kingdom.

The sowing did not stop there. Each of us receives the seed in our heart, and it brings forth fruitage. In that way, the sowing continues on through the whole Gospel Age. But this first parable has a special relationship to the sowing of the early part of the age.

Mt 13:24 —Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:' - 6-

The Second Parable sounds much like the First Parable. Its concept seems much the same. Then it elaborates:

Mt 13:25 —But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said, 'Sir, didn't you just sow good seed? How is it that the field now has tares in it, weeds?'

He said, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said unto him, 'Well, shall we go and gather them up?' He said, 'No; lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them.'

Instead, let both grow together until the harvest (the End of the Age): and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: and gather the wheat into my barn. —That's the parable of The Wheat and the Tares.

The focus of that, although it has lessons for all through the age, refers mainly to Stage Two of the Church, when tares began to infiltrate the Christian community. Revelation 2:8 makes explicit reference to people coming into the church who do not belong there. —Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; 'These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;' Notice that introduction. Jesus introduces himself to each church of Revelation in a different way.

Chapter One describes Jesus as a High Priest dressed in his garb, and all of the following descriptions in that first chapter. He has eyes that burn like a lamp, and feet polished by fire. He says, I was the one who was dead and is alive for evermore. —Then, in each church, a fragment of that description is used. That fragment applies to the individual church specifically.

Smyrna was the church where Christians were being tossed to the lions. It was particularly pertinent to say to that church, I am he who was dead and is alive. —This was his encouragement to them: You, too, will live again if you faithfully persevere as I did. —Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. — These words comfort all of us down through the age, but historically Smyrna's experiences specially required these words.

Re 2:9,10 refers to people coming into the church, professing to be spiritual Israelites, but are not. In the Gospel Age, it would not matter if someone professed to be a Jew or a Gentile literally. We are all one in Christ. That profession would not make a difference. It is when a person claims to be a spiritual Israelite and is not, that the deceit could hurt.

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The Apostle John, in his Epistles (not his Gospel), speaks of this time. John lived far enough into the Gospel Age (after all the other apostles were gone) to see the Gnostic Heresy. The Gnostic Heresy was severe and difficult for the church early on. That was the Second period of the Church. The word gnostic means to know. — Gnostics thought they could gain salvation by thinking about how

things were. They did not respect the revealed Word highly. They relied on their own thinking, their own imaginations.

One of the Gnostic theories was that God is So high and we are So low that God would not directly contact people like us. He would have to work through intermediaries, and there were various levels of intermediaries through which he worked. Some said Jesus had been an apparition, some said he was a spirit that came upon a normal man named Jesus, others said Jesus was a materialized body, acting a part—he didn't suffer, his experiences were like a drama (not real).

John wrote: If you don't say that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, you're an anti-Christ against Christian truth. —(I John 4:3) In Jesus' parable, he called these impostors tares—so-called Christians who claimed to be true wheat. Jesus had sowed good seed, which brought forth good Christians. The enemy sowed bad seed (error), the errors and tares grew after the apostles passed away.

At the end of the Gospel age, there is a harvest, separating the tares from the wheat. (Matthew 13:39). But the thrust of the parable is that it represented the time when the bad were coming in to the early church.

Parable Three of Matthew 13—Verse 31 says, Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but then it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree, So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

The birds of the air come and lodge in the branches. —Some could look at this and think, Faith is good. It grows. —But this branch is the lodging place for birds. Are these birds good, or are these birds bad? In Revelation 18:2, there a reference to birds, and that could be a parallel to Matthew 13.32. These birds inhabited a growth in Christianity. This is the Third Church, Pergamos, meaning earthly elevation. —That's where the faithful martyr Antipas was suffering. Anti-pas is like Anti-papa. Papacy began to rise here, and the concept of the Nicolaitans, that there is a lordship in the church. There are teachers and leaders and helpers, but there is no one above the other. Jesus said, One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. (Matthew 23:8) In this third church, there began to be a hierarchy, a government. - 8-

Re 18:2 —Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, has become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. —These birds seem to correspond to the birds of Matthew 13:32. Because we are familiar with the admonition to have faith as a mustard seed, this unfavorable light on these birds may be bothersome. Therefore, do not make a decision until we look at Parable Four. See if there is a trend related to events in the church's history.

Mt 13:33 —Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Jesus, on one occasion, warned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, also the leaven of the Herodians. Leaven was not a good thing. Even in the Old Testament types, leaven wasn't good. Leaven was one thing you never burned on the altar. Leaven represents sin, corruption.

On the Passover, the children of Israel were commanded to make their bread without leaven. Leaven puffs up. Paul said, Knowledge puffs up, meaning it makes us proud. We do not want that which puffs up. —A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. —

In Matthew 13:33, the woman is leavening the whole thing So it is totally perverted. This is the only parable of Matthew 13 that discusses a woman. In Revelation, the Fourth Church is the only church where a woman is discussed. The woman of Revelation is called Jezebel.

This is another illustration of the church becoming corrupted. Just as the Jewish nation was represented in a fig tree, and all the other nations were spoken of as trees, So here Christianity is growing into a national entity, a government. In the fourth church, it is being completely corrupted by the teaching of Jezebel.

The fifth parable gives us a ray of hope. (Matthew 13:44) The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man has found, he hides, and for joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys the field. —Didn't Jesus purchase the world? The Heavenly Father allowed Jesus to find something in the field that was specially valuable. There was a special treasure in that field, and Jesus gave everything he had for it.

That treasure was Christ's Bride, the Church, the Little Flock, the Elect. For that treasure, Jesus purchased the whole field, the whole world. Not only did Jesus have the treasure; he also had the world.

A young man wants a bride who is lovely, good character, gracious, kind. He wants a good bride, not just anybody. That is the way Jesus is. He wants gems of the rarest value, with crystallized character, that he can work with, massage, chip, shape, chisel.

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He wants to deal with gems that are so ardent in their character after they've gone through the heat and furnace of this life that they will be jewels in the crown. They will truly be fit to be described as that lovely bride that comes down from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, the New Jerusalem, the Little Flock. That's what it means to be this treasure hid in the field. Jesus redeems the whole world, but the treasure is his Bride.

This Fifth Parable relates to the Reformation. Reform, repent. The church was almost obscured in the world, the field, almost blotted out. It was covered with the growth of the Dark Ages. And Jesus rescued that treasure out of that gloom and doom position. He broke forth with the Reformation. It was a difficult task. It took a strong Christian to serve in this capacity. Martin Luther wasn't the most refined Christian. His edges were a little sharp. But he was rock-hard, ardent. God uses servants who set your forehead like flint, and speak My words. (Ezekiel 3:9-11) Luther's friends warned him not to leave his safety, even though the king had promised him safe passage. He said, I must go and speak what my conscience tells me to say, even if there are devils surrounding me there. —He gave a two-hour speech in one language, and then repeated it in another language. He was not cowered. —Here I stand. I can do no other.

Mt 13:45 —Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. —That is what we do. The pearl of great price—the Truth, the Gospel, the privilege of becoming the Bride of Christ—is worth more than everything we have. All else is worthless, compared to that pearl. Nothing is worthy to be compared with the beauties of the glory beyond.

Christ told Paul, You are going to endure many things for my sake, and Paul later recalled that, The sufferings of this world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. —Give it all up. Accept the sufferings. Don't be distracted by this

world's goods. Devote it all to Christ. Pay it all for the privilege of securing the Truth and your position in Christ.

This is a lesson to each one of us, but it specially fits to the Sixth Church. They were pursuing with diligence the pearl of great price. This was the time when the Bibles were printed by the millions. It refreshed the church as never before, out of the Dark Ages. The Bible Study helps they wrote and examined and considered are still treasures to us today. They bought and secured that Truth, as never before.

Now, we are reaching the End of the Age. Matthew 13:47 — Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. —That's what the Gospel net has been doing. The Gospel net has been out to call all from the highways and byways whoever would have an ear—to come in. - 10-

Mt 13:48 —Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of this age: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This is a parable, of course. —The furnace of fire is something like what happened in Parable Number Two: At the end of the age (Matthew 13:40), the tares are gathered in bundles and burned. — To harmonize all Scripture, we know that everyone has an opportunity for life in the Kingdom. This burning is referring to the destruction of a situation: nominal, false claimers to the name of Christ will be destroyed a such—not their lives, but their false claims.

The point of this parable is that the Gospel Net has gone out for 2000 years, but there will come a time in the End of the Age when it is drawn ashore and some will be honored and some will not. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus warned: Not every one that saith unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? In thy name done many wonderful works?' Then I will profess to them, 'I never knew you: depart from me.'

How do we know a good Christian from a bad Christian? We can't judge the heart. But Jesus says there is something we can observe that will give us a hint about whether a man is a hypocrite or whether he is sincere: Matthew 7:16 —You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes out of thorns, or figs from thistles? So every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree can't bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

That's what determines whether the Lord is going to say, Well done, good and faithful servant or I never knew you. —It's whether you're bringing forth the fruits that are consistent with the Christlike character. The fruitage is what counts. If we're not bearing fruit, we're not part of the Vine, we're not part of the Body. We won't be a part of the overcoming class. —Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.

At the end of this age, there is a testing. We're already in the period during the End of the Age when there has been a general sifting work. The whole point of the Harvest of the Jewish era was to find the good wheat and bring them into the garner of the Gospel. Now we're at the end of the Gospel Age.

- 11-

We see the tares being bundled together for destruction. All the bad systems are finally going to fall in Armageddon. Babylon joins in three parts, and then splits in three parts. One of those three parts was the False Prophet.

Revelation 13 shows the Papacy (the first beast), and then the two-horned Beast that comes out later (the church of England and Ireland), and then the Image of the Beast that comes up after that. The Image of the Beast is probably a Christian organization that resembles the original Beast (Papacy).

Papacy, the Beast, has daughters. Those are the Protestant churches which have grown and ossified and become stale and cold. All that's left is the shell of their organization. The heart of it is dry and empty.

It's not for us to judge individual people. As we look at the Word of God, we can see that there are systems in Christendom which

are not vital, not vibrant, not full of Christian life. They've been an organization that has grown up over the centuries, but they don't manifest as much life as they should.

Look out at the Christian world today. There is a variety of efforts toward ecumenicalism. In 1948, there derived the World Council of Churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the leader of this, forming a Protestant Alliance together. That tells us the tares are being drawn together, coming close into a bundle. When the Two-Horned Beast and the Image of the Beast come together, they make the False Prophet of Revelation 16. Look at the last few verses of Revelation 19, and note the connection.

Many of the systems started because of noble souls. The Lutheran church started because of Martin Luther, one of God's seven stars, a wonderful individual. But the structure stays and loses its meaning. There are many good people in the churches, but the organizations themselves are not God's Kingdom. They are going to pass in deference to the incoming Kingdom of Christ. Today, we are living in the day when these old systems which grew up during the Gospel Age (in this transition period at the end of the age, in this Parousia of the Kingdom of Christ) are coming together to lean on one another for support.

We see the bundling of the tares, ready for the conflagration yet at hand, the burning of the tares.

We must repeat, the burning is not a roasting of individual people. We're talking symbols. The burning of the tares is clearing the field for the new sowing in the next age.

We're in the period of the Dragnet Parable. - 12-

We're in the time when the Gospel Net has been pulled ashore, at the time of examining, distinguishing the good from the bad. To some extent, this has been going on all through the age; but, at the End of the Age, there's a special time of Harvest. Revelation 14 shows Jesus coming to rule the world with a crown, but he has a sickle in his hand because it's time to finish the completion of the church—to find the good, separate out the bad, and to make a distinction between the two.

How has it been throughout the Gospel Age, during the whole Christian era? They've been growing together. During the Dark Ages, the good and the bad were all mixed together, no separation at all.

Now, Matthew 24:16 says: Let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains. —(Psalms 125:2) Our devotion should not be to any system. Even if we meet with people in a church, our devotion should be to the Heavenly Father and to His Son, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ and to the Truth—and to the character of Christ that we are trying to develop. That's where our allegiance is—not faith in any organization. It is our fervent prayer that we will be faithful to our Father and Elder Brother.

Patterns mean a source of intelligence. Comparing the seven parables of Matthew 13 with the seven churches of Revelation has to impress us with the intelligence of our Master Teacher. He is carrying out an intelligent program.

Because the concept of the Rapture is accepted by conscientious Christians, we want to read what the Word of God has to say about how His people will ascend to their spiritual reward.

Many Christians have died through the age, awaiting their reward (as Paul said) until that day when the Lord will give me the crown of righteousness which is reserved for me. (II Timothy 4:8)

Jesus said (John 14:3), If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back, and receive you unto myself.

We're in that period of history when the glorification of the saints is at issue. How does this happen?

I Thessalonians 4:13—We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep (those who have died; as when Lazarus died, and Jesus said, 'He is asleep' [Joh 11:11- 14]), that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even So them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain (not UNTO, but) INTO the Parousia of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

- 13-

I Thessalonians 4:16—For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then (afterward) we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and

So shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

When Paul writes, he makes a decided point that there is a sequence involved in the glorification of the saints. He says that those who have fallen asleep in death through the age, waiting for the resurrection time, will be raised first—during the period of the Parousia. Then he says that there are some who are alive and remain. The period of the Parousia is not a moment, as we discovered from Matthew 24. During this period, those who have been faithful are raised to life. The rest, who remain, are later caught up with them when they pass into death.

The Scriptures do not teach that there will be flesh- and- blood bodies ascending through the clouds. I Corinthians 15 is another place where Paul directs the same question, about the resurrection of the saints. This whole chapter is all about resurrection, and specifically the resurrection of the church. There were some who had a problem with the concept of resurrection, and Paul was explaining it to them.

For instance, I Corinthians 15:16 says: For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen. —That is the whole point of our Christian walk. If there's no resurrection, our whole way of life is for nothing.

In I Corinthians 15:38, Paul says: God gives it a body as it pleases him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same: there is one kind of flesh of men, another of beasts and fishes and birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the (spiritual) celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial (earthly) —that's another thing. There is a glory of the sun, and the moon, and the stars: one differeth from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.

It is sown in corruption (this old corruptible body; it's like the seed that has to die); it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour (weakness—the Adamic curse); it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

Note: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

Going down to I Corinthians 15:50—Now this I say, brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. —We're not going to bring our flesh and blood into heaven. - 14-

I Corinthian 15—This is a text that's clear in its meaning. It tells us about the resurrection glory for which we are hoping. We think about our present bodies, and remember what David said, I am fearfully and wonderfully made. —We have feet on which to stand, ten toes that keep us balanced, something in our ears that gives us a sense of balance. Our eyes are placed in the best place for seeing. Our mouth has many functions—speaking, etc. We need oxygen. We're not made for heaven. Our fingers are made to grasp tangible things—not spiritual, ethereal things.

There is one body that is celestial, and there is another body that is terrestrial. The bodies we have now would not be appropriate to the heavenly realm. Then we will have spiritual bodies. The Apostle John said we really don't even know what we will be like. He wrote (I John 3:2) said, It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; and we will see him as he is.

We can only guess how the spiritual life will be, but we know it is far superior to anything we can imagine here. When Paul says that we don't bring our old bodies into heaven with us, he means we're changed into spiritual beings. When will this occur? —Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life. —It occurs when we die.

The church will be taken. They will have to complete their journey before Armageddon is finally unleashed. The church will probably all be gone from the flesh before Armageddon really begins in force. The church must pass into death. They may be persecuted, they may die of natural causes, but they cannot take their flesh into heaven. The spiritual is So far superior over the earthly that flesh could not exist in heaven.

When Revelation describes Jesus in glory, the description is symbolic. Jesus doesn't really have white hair, this is a symbolic reference to his venerable wisdom. His eyes are not really like a flame of fire; they are piercing, discerning, all- seeing. He also has eyes like a dove gentle, peaceable, tranquil, pleasant, loving. Different symbols describe differences in his heavenly character. These images are given to us to help us grasp some features of our great Lord beyond the veil.

I Corinthians 15:51,52—Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. —Paul is saying that some Christians slept in death until the End of the Age. That is what happened to Paul; but not all of us are going to sleep. In the time of the Parousia, those who die in the Lord (because it is the time of judgment, and the time of reward is at hand) will not sleep but will be changed directly into their spiritual body.

The earth cannot receive its Kingdom blessings until the church is all in glory.

- 15-

The earthly Kingdom will be established, where the blood of Christ will be used to redeem the world. The blood of Christ will be used to redeem the world in a different way from the way it has been used to redeem the church. There will not be much overlapping directly between the work of the church and the work of Christ's earthly Kingdom blessing. There will be a withholding of the redemption for the world until the church is all gathered home beyond the veil. The final members of the church may well be taken home collectively.

Revelation 7 is about the completion of God's people. Revelation 7:1 —I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, 'Don't hurt the earth, or the sea, or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

This is the period in which we are now living. The four winds are being held back, pending the time when the saints have been fully developed and ready for their glorious reward. The saints do not seem to go through the four winds of trouble, which is probably Armageddon.

There is another class of people who are also here on earth. Revelation 7:9 —After this I beheld a great multitude which no

man could number. —This is a much larger multitude than the number of the saints. This group comes out of all nations. —They stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

And cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne and worshiped God.

John was perplexed by this. He wondered, Who are these other people who are coming out after the elect have been sealed? —Re 7:13 —One of the elders worded that question, saying, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, ‘Sir, you would know better than I. Thou knowest.’ And he said to me, ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’

These are obviously Christian people, because they’re washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They’re coming out of great tribulation. The first class was sealed and taken before the four winds are loosed. Now we see another group which has suffered some of the difficulties caused by the four winds. - 16-

This second group has come out of great tribulation. It is the great tribulation which they have experienced which has cleansed them. They apply themselves to the blood of Christ for their forgiveness. It’s as though they have spots on their garments.

Jude 21: Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

These are all Christians. Some have been diligent and faithful, and some have been sloppy in their Christian course. That sloppiness is represented here as having spots on their garment. Jude says to the faithful Christians, Help your brothers. Help them. Call them back. Don’t let them fail of being an overcomer. —Some will be receiving the mercy and glory of our Lord, and some will have to be rescued because of their careless sins.

In Revelation 7, the two classes are again mentioned. The elect are sealed and faithful. The other class has dirty robes. This second

class washes their robes, come out of great tribulation, and are finally purged.

Re 7:15 says of the second class, Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. —They go to heaven. They have been resurrected spirit beings. But they are not on the throne. They serve Him before the throne.

By contrast, what happens to the truly faithful Bride of Christ? That second class was a large number of beings. The elect Bride of Christ is a Little Flock, smaller in number.

Re 3:21 —To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. —Where are the elect overcomers? IN the throne. Where is the larger multitude—not everybody, but those taken out of the nations who have become Christians but allowed spots on their garments and they had to be purged? They are BEFORE the throne—NOT ON the throne. The second class are not the Kings and Priests who reign with Christ. They are the servants in the spiritual temple. They will be purged and made of use beyond the veil, in the spiritual glories, but they miss the Chief Reward.

This lesson has contrasted the first class which is sealed, and the second class which permitted their robes to become spotted.

- 17-

Re 14:1 —I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. —This is the same group as the class in Chapter 7:3,4—There an hundred and forty and four thousand of them, and they have been sealed in their foreheads.

Re 14:3 —They sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four breasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Re 7:4 says these 144,000 are of Israel. —This is speaking spiritually. The elect Bride of Christ are spiritual Israelites.

Revelation 7 goes on to name the tribes of Israel: Juda, Reuben, Gad, Asher. They're almost all there. Almost. Dan is missing from the list. This does not mean that, literally, all Israelites will be

blessed but those of the tribe of Dan. This is a spiritual picture. It is speaking of spiritual Israelites.

Even spiritually, why is the tribe of Dan omitted? In Genesis 49, Jacob gave a blessing to all of his sons, and what he said was prophetic of what would happen in the latter years to his sons. Genesis 49:17 —Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, So that his rider shall fall off. — How is that fulfilled?

In the Book of Judges, it tells how the tribe of Dan forfeited the inheritance that God told them to conquer in the Promised Land. Instead, they went far north to a beautiful, lush area, drove out those inhabitants, and took that land. God had not told them to take that. Along the way, they took someone who was ministering to idols, and had him minister to their tribe. Judges 18:30 says, And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. — Literally, that is what happened to the tribe of Dan. They went into idolatry as a tribe. That was a snare to the whole house of Israel.

Bring that story into the Christian era, and see what it represents. In the Christian era, it represents that element (among the saints of God) who turn away from Christ, those who fall away and are not reclaimed. The people with the spotted garments ARE reclaimed.

Is there anybody in the Christian church who falls away and is never reclaimed? Hebrews 6:4 It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come—This is not speaking of casual, nominal Christians. This is describing whole- hearted Christians who accept Christ with knowledge. They are recipients of Christ's merit. They are of the Vine. - 18-

Heb 6:6 —If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Christ died once. If someone comes into the Body, and then walks away and rejects it, Christ does not die again. That person is lost. This is a severe judgment.

Peter refers to this, as well. II Peter 2:20—If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Go back a few verses, and notice what Peter says happens to these. II Peter 2:17—These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. —There is no life there.

The Apostle John also says: There is a sin unto death: I do not say that you should pray for that. —(I John 5:16) Help your brethren. Pray for those who are stumbling. Cover over the multitude of sins. But it is possible for those who come into Christ to fall away. If that is their choice, there's no hope for life beyond.

These are the people represented by the Dan class, spiritually. The Book of Revelation is typical, not literal. These are not literal Jews, but spiritual.

Twelve is a number that can picture spiritual completion. Ten (ten toes, ten horns, in Daniel) is an earthly number. Twelve apostles are the spiritual foundation of the New Jerusalem. Square the number 12 and the result is 144.

Revelation 22 is the blessed picture of the Kingdom during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ. Revelation 22:2 —In the street of it, and on either side of the river, there was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits. —Who is the Tree of Life?

Ps 1:3 —The man of God shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; his leaf shall not wither, shall not fade. That's the church. That's the Elect. They are pictured as Trees of Life.

Re 22:2 —The Tree of Life bare twelve manner of fruits. —That's odd. If we plant an apple tree, we expect apples. If we plant a pear tree, we expect pears. Whatever we plant, we only expect one kind of fruit. - 19-

These are a different kind of tree. They bear twelve manner of fruits. Even more strange is the fact that they bear their fruit more than once a year. They bear crops every single month—and yielded her fruit every month. —Twelve kinds of fruit, twelve months of the year; that's 144 fruits.

How long is the Kingdom? A Thousand Years. For each of those thousand years, there are 144,000 fruits represented in the Tree of Life. The tree represents the Elect, the Bride of Christ.

We're not literally fruit. We're not literally Jews. We're not literally from Judah or Simeon or Naphtali. We are spiritual Israelites. We are the Israel of God.

DAY 6, PART 4—SUMMARY, LESSONS, METHODS, SYMBOLS

DICK KINDIG: Welcome to the Bible Prophecy Seminar. This is the last session of our program. It will include a summary, character lessons, study methods, and a list of symbols. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine. —It's also profitable for reproof and correction and instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (or complete), thoroughly furnished unto all good works. —It doesn't seem possible to be complete in today's world without some understanding of Bible prophecy that tells us what is happening in the world and what God is accomplishing.

We need to know as much as we can about God's character, His plans, and what His people will be doing in the future. That's what this seminar has been about.

DAVID RICE: Sometimes a few Christians have wondered if there isn't a 360- day year in prophecy instead of the 365- day year we have found more appropriate. Others have suggested a 354- day year (which is a lunar year). The normal 365- day year works, while the other lengths of days do not. When the Israelites wandered 40 years in the wilderness, if there were 40 years of 360 days they would not have wandered as many days as they truly did historically. They would have been 200 days shy of the actual time they wandered. Yet, Scripture says they left Egypt on Passover and they entered and crossed Jordan at Passover. That was 40 years later, exactly—not 200 days less.

It is wise to get our facts from secular history books, and see how prophecy fits facts that actually happened at a certain time. This is

true with the prophecies of Daniel. There are different thoughts on the Seventieth Week of Israel's Favor. This treatise has offered one of the thoughts.

There was an article in Nature Magazine which proposed to settle the date of the crucifixion by evidence of astronomy. Peter said (Acts 2:16): This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; 'It shall come to pass in the last days,' saith God, 'I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out my spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy:

And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, fire, and vapor of smoke: The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

The authors of the article in Nature Magazine proposed that Peter was marking on this, to show that there had been a darkening of the sun and a turning of the moon to blood that everybody witnessed and would attach to the sacrifice of Christ that was a precursor to the final judgment in 70 A.D.

When they looked back astronomically, they found something rather amazing. In the Gospel account, it says that from the sixth hour to the ninth hour there was darkness all over the land. The sun was darkened. In the records of eclipses, it is also found that on April 3, 33 A.D., when the Passover would have fallen and Jesus would have died, there was an eclipse, visible at Jerusalem, at sunset on the evening when Jesus died. —

As the moon rose, at the horizon, it was in eclipse. The way the shadow would have fallen, there would have been an orange- red tinge to the moon. It could look something like blood. That would have appeared to all the Jews that evening if the skies were clear. Nothing says the Jews saw it, nothing says the skies were clear; but it was there.

At Passover season, every year, the moon is full. From the next day forward, it begins to wane, to decrease. This represents the diminishment of the Jewish Law because of their rejection of

Christ. The eclipse enforces this picture. It says that the favor of Israel is being eclipsed and going into remission for awhile.

In Numbers 9, Moses was keeping the Passover, and a problem arose. He didn't know quite how to administrate. Verse 2: Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, ye shall keep it in its appointed season: according to all the rites thereof...

Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. And they kept it on the fourteenth day of the first month...

There were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and Aaron on that day: And those men said unto him, 'We are defiled by the body of a dead man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering to the LORD in his appointed season?'

Moses went before the Lord and said, What do I do with this? These people are unclean ceremonially. They can't keep the Passover, and yet it is their desire.

Nu 9:9 —The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 'If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, he shall keep the Passover The fourteenth day of the second month.'

They had to keep the Passover one way or the other. We have to have the nourishment of the blood of Christ. If a person is unclean, he must keep the Passover at the next opportunity. When Israel's favor was full, at the first advent of Christ, that's when the Passover Lamb was sacrificed. As Paul said, Therefore let us keep the feast. For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. (I Corinthians 5:8,7) We keep it now.

The world is unclean, because of the body of Adamic Death in the world. They're on a journey away from God. They're not in fellowship with Him. They will have to keep the Feast of Passover (spiritually) if they're going to get life. Jesus told his apostles (John 6:53), —Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life. —All must eventually receive life from the Son of man.

The defiled eat the Passover at the next full moon. When Israel's favor has waned and then comes back again, that return of favor is today. Soon they will be reclaimed again. Their moon will be full again. At the fullness of the moon, the next full moon, the unclean (the rest of the world of mankind) will finally be cleansed and whole.

It might be interesting to list some symbols of the Bible. Discussing them might help us in our study of the Bible along various topics.

SUN = The Gospel. In Revelation 12, we read of a woman, the church, clothed with the sunlight of the Gospel. During the Fourth Trumpet, the sun was darkened because the Gospel lost its influence. It was obscured during the Dark Ages.

MOON = The Law. The woman stood on the Law. It was in the past. It was history to her. The moon does not generate independent light. The moon, the Law, was a reflection of the glory to come. Only the sun generates independent light.

STARS = Teachers. There were twelve apostolic teachers. Stars (teachers) were sent by the Lord through the age, to guide the church.

HORSES = Doctrines. What about a horse would represent a doctrine? Horses move. They pull a chariot. They can be ridden for transportation. The doctrines of the Gospel are the motivating influence that causes us to change our life and go somewhere.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, there were two asses. There was the ass and the foal of an ass. Jesus put his garments on the mature ass. He rode in on the new ass. He was presenting new doctrine that was going to phase away the old Law doctrine.

MOUNTAIN = Kingdom. The stone of Daniel 2 grows into a great mountain that fills the whole earth. Micah 4:1 —But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. —The MOUNTAIN is God's Kingdom, and it's established over and above and superior to all the other mountains (kingdoms of this world).

Mic 4:2 —And many nations shall come, and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God

of Jacob; he will teach us his ways, we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

But he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

What a lovely time that will be! No wars. Peace will reign supreme. What a promise!

EAGLES = Good. Revelation 12:14.

FOWLS = Bad. Luke 13:19. Revelation 18:2.

TWO WITNESSES = The Old and the New Testaments, the Scriptures. The Two Witnesses are described in a way that reminds us of Moses and Elijah. Revelation 11:6 —These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. —Who had that power literally? Elijah. Elijah shut heaven for 3- 1/2 years, that it would not rain. Elijah represents the Christian church that precedes the Day of the Lord. Elijah shall come first, and he'll convert the heart of the children to the fathers, and vice versa. If he fails, God will smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5,6)

For 2000 years, the church has been preaching the message of peace, of nobility, of doctrine and character, of looking to the Father. They have tried to do the best they could to spread the good word, but the world has not been converted. That is why God is going to smite the world with a curse, Armageddon, before He brings in the new Kingdom. Elijah has been, down through the age, the church. The 1260 years were the Dark Ages, with no rain, no blessing.

Re 11:6 —These have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. — That is like Moses, who smote the earth with plagues and caused the water to turn to blood.

Elijah pictures the New Testament. Moses pictures the Old Testament.

Moses and Elijah were associated with Jesus on another occasion, as well. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus was there, and there appeared with him Moses and Elijah. (Mark 9:4)

The Two Witnesses are the written Word.

Re 1:5 —Jesus Christ is the faithful witness. —He is not one of Two Witnesses. He is THE faithful witness. He is the living faithful witness. The two prophets (Moses and Elijah) are the written Word.

Re 19:13 —He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. —That's Jesus. He is the living Word. The Two Witnesses are the written Word.

It is interesting to not one other comparison between these three: Jesus was tempted for 40 days. He did not eat those 40 days. Moses went into the mountain to get the Law, and he didn't eat during that time. He fasted for 40 days. When Elijah fled into the wilderness, for 40 days he went on the strength of food he had eaten previously.

The Witnesses prophesied in sackcloth and ashes for 1260 days, and then were raised for a little over 3 years. Jesus had a ministry of 3- 1/2 years (1260 literal days). Then he died, and was raised on the 3rd day. Jesus was buried by his friends. The Two Witnesses were not buried by their enemies. Jesus rose from the tomb. The Two Witnesses rose back to life again. Jesus ascended in a cloud, seen only by his friends. The Two Witnesses ascended to heaven, and their enemies beheld them. This is a study in comparison between Jesus, the Living Word, and the Two Witnesses, the written Word.

Back in the Tabernacle, there is a similar lesson. In the Holy, there is a Table of Shewbread. Who is the Bread of God that comes down to us, which we must eat? Jesus. John 6:51 —I am the living bread which came down from heaven. —On the other hand, the bread also represents the written Word upon which we feast and from which we are nourished.

WINDS = War. Daniel 7:2 —The four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. —

Then, Elijah was in the wilderness for 1260 days, 3- 1/2 years of drought. He came out of the wilderness, but then had to flee again for a time. This time he fled to Mount Horeb, where God showed him a vision. (I Kings 19:11) —God said, Elijah, go to the mount, and tell me what you see. —Elijah saw the winds, which were so strong that they broke the mountain and the rocks. The winds of

wars which the church sees—these wars have broken the mountain (kingdoms) of Europe.

EARTHQUAKE = Revolutions. Since World War I, we have had many revolutions in governments, although the most notable one was in Russia.

FIRE = Anarchy.

STILL, SMALL VOICE = God's Kingdom.

PRIESTS = The church.

BEASTS = Governments.

DAYS = Years.

HORNS = Power. Ten horns meant ten powers. From the Grecian horn (Alexander's power) came four horns (division of his power). Describing the Medo- Persian Empire, the higher horn came to have greater power later; the Persian horn dominated the Median horn.

These are suggestions to apply when endeavoring to understand prophecy. When they seem consistent with other study, they may be helpful and illuminating.

We have not studied Revelation 13 in depth together. Let us do that now. Revelation 13:1 speaks of a beast who has seven heads and ten horns. All the beasts of Daniel cumulatively had seven heads and ten horns. That reminds of Daniel. Then Revelation speaks of the leopard, the bear, the lion, the ten horns. Again, we think of the four beasts of Daniel.

This beast of Revelation 13:1 is the Catholic church based upon all the empires that preceded it. Revelation 13:11 —I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake like a dragon. He exercised all the power of the first beast before him. He caused the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

He doeth great wonders, So that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that they should make an Image of the Beast.

If the first beast is Papacy, the second beast reminds you greatly of the original Papal beast. The second beast has two horns (two powers) in it. The horns were lamb-like, and didn't seem particularly offensive, but when it spoke! It spoke like a dragon—a real power.

Look back in history, and see what happened after the Papal beast arose, look for some system that looks a whole lot like the original. The Church of England seems to fit this pattern.

In Germany, there was the Reformation by Luther. In Switzerland, it was by Zwingli. There was a variety of Reformers—Calvin, etc. They all reformed on principle and on doctrine. In England, it was different. King Henry VIII didn't like the Roman Catholic Church to command him how to live his life. For that reason, he decided to split away. There were other English Reformers who were principled, and they nobly stood against the Church of Rome. Henry just took the church that existed in England and controlled it. It was now the Church of England, and Rome was no longer in control. He wasn't noble in this. He continued a system that looked much like the Papacy. It had great power. In its heyday, it persecuted and burned- at- the- stake with every bit as much fervency as the Roman Church did.

It had wide authority—went everywhere—because England went everywhere. England ruled the waves. When it came to America, it was called the Anglican Church. The reason it had two horns was that originally this church was the Church of England and Ireland. In the year 1871, the Irish horn was cast off, and it has been known only as the Church of England since. The identification is still there: the two-horned beast is the Church of England/Ireland.

Next, the Church of England allows the others to make an Image to the Beast. This must be another Christian development in Christian society. It probably refers to all the other Protestant churches, in-line, long-established churches, who finally coalesce and finally form a union.

In 1948, the World Council of Churches came together, making one union with most of these churches in it. —

Every single one of these organizations has good people in it—the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, and the allied Protestant churches. They are not God's Kingdom. They don't teach God's plan. They're not God's representative. They've been

used to spread the Gospel in that they have published the Bible. They are not the agency which God is going to use to bless all the families of the earth.

They will go down as part of the old world. Their outstanding character is beast- like.

In Revelation 13:13, casting fire down from heaven on earth means they're calling down divine judgments. They are saying, We are an ecclesiastical authority, and we will decide what's right and what's wrong when it comes to Christianity. —It's symbolic of the majesty and the power and the reverence and the awe which they commanded by virtue of their proclamations.

When the Day of Atonement offerings were given (Leviticus 16), notice the particulars of how the Day of Atonement sacrifices were working. This shows that the Plan of God is in two stages first for the church, and then for the world.

Le 16:3 —Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

Le 16:11 —Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. —Who was the house of Aaron? That would refer to the sons of Aaron. Who were the priests in Israel? Every single one of them was a descendant of Aaron.

This is saying that the first step of atonement had to be for the priests. The priests had to be atoned for, before anybody else. The priests represent the true Christian church. They must be atoned for first. They are the ones who will serve as priests in the Kingdom to bring the whole world back to God.

After the priests are atoned for, then there is another offering that is offered for the people.

Le 16:15 —Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock ... And he shall make an atonement because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. —There are two classes involved in the atonement. The priests are first, and then all the people of Israel. It's a two- step process, one after the other.

Christ dies only once, but his blood is used first for the church and then it will be used to redeem the whole world later. God first rescues the church, and afterwards rescues the whole world of mankind.

In the Gospel accounts, we have two genealogies of our Lord which bring us to the First Advent. One is in Matthew, and the other is in Luke.

In Matthew, the genealogy is traced from Abraham down through David, and from David down to a man named Zorobabel, and then down to Jesus. Luke was a Gentile, so in his Gospel he was interested in taking the genealogy all the way back to Adam. He brings it down to Abraham, and then to David. Whereas Matthew's genealogy went through David's son Solomon, Luke's genealogy went through David's other son Nathan. Both genealogies include a man named Zorobabel. After Zorobabel, the genealogy splits again. One line of genealogy goes one way, the other goes the other way. Both lines get to Jesus.

Zorobabel had different sons. One is traced in one direction, the other is traced in the other direction. Joseph's genealogy is described in Matthew. Mary's genealogy is described in Luke. No matter which way we go, through Joseph or through Mary, we find that Jesus was the son of David, the seed of Abraham, and that he fulfilled all the promises.

Why is it important to show it both ways? Whose son was Jesus? Jesus was really the son of Mary. He was not really the son of Joseph. It was a virgin birth. But Joseph was Jesus' legal father. Matthew wants to show that legally speaking Jesus is still the descendant of David and Abraham.

It is interesting that, even though the genealogies are not the same all the way, they coalesce at Zorobabel. Who was Zorobabel? The leader of Israel as they returned to Jerusalem from their captivity in Jerusalem. He is mentioned in Zechariah 4:7-9, and is a picture of Christ. How appropriate that the two genealogies should both highlight Zorobabel, the one who was a figure of Christ that was to come.

Thank you, dear friends, for being with us these six days. Our study has been intense. The clarity of the prophecies, due to the increased light of our day, is amazing. For this we thank the Lord, and all the devoted students of prophecy who labored through the years, to give us this rich heritage. Surely, as the Psalmist declared,

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"
(Psalms 119:105). May the Lord be praised for such a rich
treasure. Amen.

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