Bible Thoughts

with P.H.A.Hopkins

The Great Tribulation

The thoughts and note material given on these pages are only a possible suggestion of the meaning, they must not be taken as inspired, however they are prayerfully prepared and compared with other similar material. There are many ways in which God's Word can be analyzed and none must be taken in place of the Word of God itself.

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The Great Tribulation

In the web page <u>"The Rapture"</u> we explained what will next happen to the True Believers. According to the Bible this is the next event to take place, there are no prophecies given which must happen before this event of the Rapture.

We have briefly given several passages which bring this out: 1 Thess 4:15-17.

"15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we 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."

1 Cor. 15:51-53.

"51 Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

As we approach this event there will be many people who will claim to have the answers to the world troubles or even claim they are the Messiah, Jesus warned us of these possibilities and we are not to be fooled. In fact as you are reading this it may have already taken place and you are wondering what is about to happen to you and the world. You have been "left behind" and now are to face the Tribulation which are described in the following text.

Throughout history there have been many attempts to work out the future plans of God by interpreting the Scriptures in the Bible and what appears to be prophecies for the future. We must remember that many actions or events prophesied would probably not make sense to some-

one living over 2000 years ago, especially if the prophecy involved the description of any object involved from today. So some words or descriptions may not make sense, even to us, until the situations or the event occurs.

There are over eighteen hundred prophecies in the Word of God, the Bible, concerning the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. In love God has revealed to us what is the future, He has given us these signs so that we can understand His plans for Mankind.

Certain nations in particular are involved, - Israel, Europe, Russia and Babylon. Ezekiel prophecies of Russia leading an alliance of other nations to attack Israel. We can expect that the financial world will be based upon a city called Babylon. The city of Babylon is mentioned throughout the Bible, it was a pagan city against God from the beginning. It became a very important city for nearly two thousand years before being destroyed. Yet its influence is still apparent and the prophecies indicate it will rise again and become the centre for trading.

The Tribulation Period now commences.

Most of the information concerning the Tribulation period is found in the book of Revelation.

In chapters 1-3, we are given details of the vision that John was given concerning the Lord Jesus Christ followed by the messages Jesus gave for the seven churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and finally Laodecia.

In chapter 4 and 5, John is transferred into heaven where we hear about the great scroll with the seven seals which could not be opened until the appearance of the Lamb of God. It was stated that he is the only one who was able to open the seals on this scroll.

What is this scroll?

When God created Mankind He gave them the title deeds to the world and this is written on the scroll, but unfortunately when Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they failed to obey the rules set by God, then Satan won these title deeds to the world. When Jesus, the God/man died on the cross, he took the punishment and claimed back the title deeds from

Satan.

As the Lamb of God He has the right to open the seals upon these deeds and release the contents.

As these seals are opened we are shown the future events as planed by God, His judgements on Mankind, and the future of Mankind on earth, the Tribulation period is now commencing.

God appears to be allowing the world to have its own way. Having lost from the earth the many millions of True Believers into heaven, their presence and effect on the earth has been taken away, the presence of the Holy Spirit has also left with them.

As each Seal is opened various events happen in heaven and on the earth.

The First Seal is opened.

The Four Riders.

Revelation 6:1,2.

"I And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

Following the first seal we see someone who comes in great power to rule the world, the white horseman, who conquers. The bow shows his power, the crown indicates dominion, he has great power. Who is this person? This horseman is imitating the Lord Jesus, who does not actually appear until later. This is the AntiChrist, the devil's false Messiah. Daniel 8:24,25.

"24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.
25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

The Second Seal is opened.

Revelation 6:3,4.

"3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. "

A Red Horse is released who had the power to take peace away from the earth.

We think that the world is bad today. The Bible prophesied that it will get worse and worse. Just consider the weapons which are even now available to mankind, what will the future hold, the world might be about to suffer a nuclear war or biological war.

The Third Seal is opened.

Revelation 6:5,6.

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

In the time of John, a quart or "measure" of wheat was about the daily food required for each person to survive. The "penny" would be about a days wages for a normal worker. This is indicating that the price of food will rise so much that a person would just about earn enough for himself each day. Widespread famine is the obvious result.

The Fourth Seal is opened.

Revelation 6:7,8

"7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat

on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth"

John now sees two persons riding out towards the earth, "Death" is on the pale horse and "Hades" is following behind. They have great power and the result is that a fourth of the world population is killed as a result of the actions of the previous three horses, the sword, the famines, and possible plagues etc.

I urge you to make sure that you do not see these first events by repenting of your sin and asking Jesus to forgive you and come into your heart today.

We will now have a closer look at the those involved in the opening of the first four seals.

The Antichrist.

Over history there have been many people who appear to be the Anti-Christ, some actually claiming to be that person. Hitler often referred himself as the messiah.

It appears that at first the Antichrist brings peace to the earth because war and death does not appear until the opening of the second seal. The AntiChrist, or "against Christ," is a man who has been taken over by the power of Satan, he will offer himself as the answer to the problems of the world. There are over one hundred passages which describe the Antichrist, yet the actual word only appears in four verses found in the letters by John.

1 John 2:18;

"18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

1 John 2:22;

"22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."

1 John 4:3;

" 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

2 John verse 7

"7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

There are more than twenty-five names or titles given to the Antichrist in the scriptures, all help show the evilness of this man. We know that Satan gives him his power, his authority and throne, is he Satan incarnate?

Here are some of these names.

"Man of sin the son of perdition;" 2 Thess. 2:3,4.

"Then shall that Wicked be revealed" 2 Thess 2:8-10.

"The beast from the sea" Rev. 13:1-6.

"I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Rev. 17:1-18.

"A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: <u>Daniel 8:23-</u>25.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. <u>Daniel 7:7-8.</u>

See also Daniel 7:24,25;

The Antichrist is described in great detail, yet we are not given any idea of his identity. However, you will know when he appears after the Rapture of the church. 2 Thess. 2:7-12.

We also know that he will be a great, charismatic leader whose enhanced words will turn the people to him. Note that his words will also be against God, blasphemies. Revelation 13:5.

Daniel prophecies that the Antichrist will be cruel and take over the whole world, any who turns to God will be persecuted.

As he will make a covenant with Israel we must assume that he will come from a Gentile nation.

The False Prophet.

Revelation 13:11-15.

"11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 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 dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

John is using symbols to explain the evilness of this person, it appears that he will initially appear with a humble but attractive personality, he will combine politics and religion with subtile but convincing arguments, he will be able to control the people with his speeches.

With the addition of Satan we now have the false, unholy trinity of Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Authority comes from Satan to the Antichrist and the False Prophet leads the people to worship the Antichrist.

The False Prophet will be able to demonstrate and use great power, produce great signs and so quickly deceive the people, this power is being

given through the Antichrist, who gets his power from Satan, the Dragon, Rev 13:2-8.

This indicates that Satan has the power to work miracles, they are not tricks, read Matt 24:24.

The False Prophet is able to copy God by calling fire from heaven, possibly pretending to be Elijah. He will create an image of the Antichrist in the Jewish temple, <u>Rev 13:14</u>. Some how this image will be able to breath and speak, <u>Rev 13:15</u>. This act must be accomplished by demonic power.

Political power of the False Prophet

John tells us that the False Prophet will introduce sweeping economic plans for the world.

Revelation 13:16,17.

"16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

No one will be allowed to trade in any way without this license mark. Anyone who refuses the mark will not be allowed to buy or sell anything.

The Martyrs.

The Lamb now opens the fifth seal.

Revelation 6:9-10.

"9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season,

until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. "

After the True Believers have been taken up to Heaven in the Rapture there are many who now realize how wrong they have been and turn to Jesus as their Saviour. Satan and the Antichrist cannot tolerate these and destroy any who refuse to worship the Antichrist. These martyrs are the believers who turned to Jesus after the Rapture.

Following the Rapture, God will apparently redirect His point of focus upon Israel, as a result there will be many Jews who turn towards Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

Who will be able to tell them about Jesus, as all True Believers will have gone? There will be many Gentiles who went to church but never put their faith truly in Jesus and have now realize how foolish they were and turned to Christ. In addition there must be millions of copies of the Word of God in all major languages and distributed around the world, many will have these copies and will read these Bibles and find the truth.

God will also raise up two witnesses special men who will proclaim Jesus to the Jews and the world.

According to the prophet Zechariah, in the period of the Tribulation, two-thirds of the Jews on the earth will be killed. Zechariah 13:8.9.

"8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

9 And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God."

Matt 24:9,10. Jesus told his disciples when they asked about the end times.

"9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

In the time of the Tribulation there will be many who turned to Jesus after the Rapture and become faithful Christians who must be prepared to die for their faith. Rev 6:9.

John tells us that these martyrs are waiting under the alter of God, a place of safety and honour, until He carries out His planned punishment. Each will be given a white robe. Rev 3:5.

"5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

The Sixth Seal is opened.

Revelation 6:12-17.

"12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

God now releases many events which involve both cosmic objects and earth bound events upon the people on the earth.

Other scriptures contain references to these events. Isaiah 34:1-5.

"I Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

- 2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.
- 3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcase's, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
- 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.
- 5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea (Edom), and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. "

The Edomites were often at war against the Jewish nation. Joel 2:30-31.

"30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. "

The world and the people of the earth are beginning to suffer the anger of God for His rejection.

144,000 Witnesses.

Revelation 7:1-8.

God now releases His angels to control the climate of the world, but first He arranges a method of protection and care for the people who are on the earth and turned to Him in worship.

God is about to raise up 144,000, specially chosen, probably celibate, dedicated **Jewish** evangelists, 12,000 from each Jewish tribe.

The number 12 has many connections with the Jewish nation, for example:-

- The breastplate worn by the High Priest had twelve precious stones.
- There were twelve holy loaves upon the showbread table in the tabernacle.

• The future city of God will have twelve gates.

God has chosen to use His special, chosen nation, the Jews, for a special ministry during these terrible times.

The angel tells John that the 144,000 will be specially sealed by God, Revelation 7:2,3.

What is this seal? In <u>Rev 14:1</u> we are told that the seal identifies them as God's own people and the seal obviously gives them great protection as the world is punished.

"And 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."

These witnesses will not worship the Antichrist or take the mark of the Beast, they will be totally dedicated to the work of God during this Tribulation time. All true Believers were also sealed by the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor 1:22.

"22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Eph 1:13.

"13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

Eph 4:30.

"30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Their preaching and dedication to God will bring millions of Jews and Gentiles to Christ, Revelation 7:9,10.

"9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

The Seventh Seal is opened.

Revelation 8:1

"I And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour."

What caused the half hour of silence in heaven? We are not told but with the breaking of the seventh seal comes the second series of judgments—the seven trumpets, was it so terrible it shocked those in heaven or did God introduce a delay for those on earth to think before the next stage?

The Censer and Trumpets

A single angel now approaches the altar and given a golden censer. He fills this censer with the prayers of the saints and fire from the alter. Seven angels have been given trumpets and now prepare to sound as the censer content is thrown onto the earth.

Revelation 8:5.

"5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The Trumpets are now sounded one at a time and with each sounding the conditions on earth become more terrible. The objects falling from heaven could be meteors.

"7 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. 8 And 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;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. 10 And 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;

11 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.

12 And 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.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

Worse is yet to come!!!!

Gog and Magog.

In <u>Ezekiel chapters 38 to 39</u> there is a prophecy that a massive confederations of nations will attack and invade the nation of Israel while it is having a time of peace and prosperity. The only time that we believe Israel will have peace is when the Antichrist signs a peace treaty as part of his rule following the Rapture.

So this event must take place during the first half of the Tribulation Period.

The countries involved are listed in <u>Ezekiel 38:1-6.</u>

- "I And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 2 Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,
- 3 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee,
- O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal:
- 4 And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:
- 5 Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet:
- 6 Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. "

Some of the names may not be recognizable today, but taking the location we find the following countries in these areas.

Gog (became "Rosh"). Russia.

Magog. Central Asia.

Meshech/Tubal/Gomer. Turkey.
Persia. Iran.
Ethiopia, ancient Cush. Sudan.
Put. Libya.

Most of these countries are predominately of Muslim faith.

They attack Israel.

Ezekiel 38:9.

"9 Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee."

When they attack Israel it appears that God intervenes and destroy the army. Read Ezekiel 38:1 to 39:29. Note: "12 And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land." Note that Iraq is not apparently involved, why? If you follow the plan of God you will see that Babylon is involved in the final destruction and Babylon is in Iraq.

Rev 9:1-21.

Following the fifth trumpet sounding we see a "star" falls from heaven, but it is obviously a living being, an angel who has a key to the bottom-less pit and releases creatures which John describes as "locusts," but as they come from the bottomless pit they must be demonic angels. As proof that God is still in full control, these "locust" are given power to hurt the people, without His seal of protection who have rejected God, for the next five months, but they are not to hurt nature in any way or those people with His seal of protection.

John tries to describe what these "locust" look like, it is difficult to understand what he saw but they seem to be able to sting like scorpions. They have something in their tail with which they can attack a person, the sting gives great pain but appears not to be life threatening to the person stung.

The Sixth Trumpet sounds.

As the trumpet sounds a commandment comes from the altar to release four demonic angels which had been locked up by God sometime previous. They are given the power to kill one third of the world's population that do not have the protection of God.

We are now told that an army of 200,000,000 "horsemen" has appeared, from the description given by John they are a human army, using modern weapons, probably from the nations to the East on the way to attack the Antichrist.

Yet those still alive would not repent or turn to God, preferring to still worship their idols, who obviously did not have any power and therefore could not help the situation in anyway.

Something withheld.

Rev 10:1-10:

A very large angel appears and places himself upon the earth. He makes an announcement and thunders speak, but John is forbidden to record the words spoken by the angel and the thunders.

The angel spoke again, "There will be time no longer," i.e. there will be no more delay. When the seventh trumpet is sounded judgement will be poured out and the end of the tribulation time will rapidly come.

Rev 10:7, "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Truth about God will be revealed when

John is told to eat the little book (scroll), this is to remind him that what he is seeing may be pleasant to his taste, but bitter as it involves great judgement on the creation of God.

The Two Witnesses.

His kingdom is established on earth.

Rev 11:3-13.

Considering the trouble that people have made for God He could easily have left the unbelievers to their fate, but God does not write off the many millions who are left on the earth, He sends two people with the message of salvation, reaching out to all who are willing to listen. It appears that they will be preaching for the first half of the tribulation period

From the words of Revelation we are not told about the two messengers until halfway through the tribulation time. Their ministry is to witness the love of God for Mankind for a very specific period of *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*. Due to the love of God for His creation, they were present, preaching, on the earth from the time of the Rapture.

John reveals that these two witnesses will have great power and will give the message from God for three and half years:-Rev 11:4-13.

- "4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.
- 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.
- 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

Most Bible students identify one of them as Elijah, because God took him up to heaven and because of the prophecy of Malachi 4:5.

"5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: "

Elijah also used similar miracles to those used by the Two Witnesses. The second witness is usually identified as Moses, as both Elijah and Moses were present at the transfiguration of Christ. Matt 17:3. In addition Moses also did similar miracles.

These Two Witnesses message will be meant for the whole world, both Jews and the Gentiles, because the judgement of God is about to come on any who do not worship God.

The preaching of these two witnesses will create intense hatred in many people and demand their deaths, but God has given them power to defend themselves, fire from their mouth, plagues and they can effect the climate, things like drought and water turned to blood.

God protects these two witnesses until their ministry is complete. We then hear of "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." The Beast, the Antichrist as such, has not been mentioned up to now but he has been at work on the earth, he signed a peace treaty with the Jews, he has taken control of governments and nations.

Rev 11:8.9.

"8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

The death of the Two Witnesses makes the Antichrist very popular and it shows how evil the people on earth have become. Most cultures bury their dead very quickly but these bodies were left to rot out in the open and the people had a celebration party, showing their contempt for their message and for God.

The "great city" is obviously Jerusalem, it is describe to be "like Sodom and Egypt," a place of evil.

We are told that the two bodies will be visible around the world, a situation which is very available today via satellites and the Internet.

After three and half days of celebration and joy by the world, God makes His next move and breaths life back into the two dead bodies, and "great fear fell on all those who saw it."; at this demonstration of the power of God.

A loud voice from heaven now summons them up to heaven. "And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them." Very visible to the world and this event will be followed by a very severe earthquake, which will destroy a tenth of the city of Jerusalem and seven thousand men. The word used for "people" actually has the meaning of "men of name." This could indicate that they were people of power or famous leaders who had come to gloat over the dead witnesses of God.

Would this event make the people turn to God? *and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven*.verse 13. Unfortunately I doubt if this is a true turning to God, just emotion. However, some may turn truly to the loving call of God.

The seventh angel trumpet is sounded.

The action now turns back to heaven.

"15 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.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

The Woman.

"I And 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:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

There have been many interpretation of this description, but there is only one which agrees with other scripture, this "woman" must be the nation of Israel, the main target of Satan.

Scripture of often describes Israel as a woman, for example see <u>Isaiah</u> 26:16-18; <u>Isaiah 66:7,8</u>; <u>Micah 4:10,11</u>; <u>Micah 5:3.</u>

We see a woman who has failed to deliver her child, Israel has not shown God to the world, but had the honour of bringing Christ into the world, Rev 12:5.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Jesus Christ, Incarnation: A child is born.

Jesus Christ Ascends to heaven: Caught up to God.

The Second Coming: He will rule.

The Dragon.

Rev 12:3,4.

"3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

The Dragon represents Satan, and shows his true nature. He is out to destroy Israel and prevent the plans of God for Mankind, but he fails to destroy the Christ child. So Satan and a third of the angels(stars of heaven) who had followed him were sent to the earth.

Having failed to destroy the plans of God, Satan is now out to "deceive the world." to stop the world seeking Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation.

Satan blinds the minds of the people, totally determined to lie about the grace of God, planting doubt everywhere he can. <u>2 Cor 4:3,4.</u>

"3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

The Power of Satan.

When John saw Satan he saw "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." John calls him "The prince of the world," <u>John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11.</u> as shown by the crowns.

Satan commands a great army, "a third of the stars(angels) of heaven" who joined Satan in disobedience of God. Some have already been imprisoned, though there are very many who are out to destroy Mankind. Satan had been free to enter heaven but now God takes the next step. Rev 12:7-11.

"7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The Believers are probably the 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

Note that this battle involves God's angels against Satan's angels; Godled humans against Satan-led humans. Satan has already been judged, but God has, for a reason known only to Him, not yet carried out the sentence, but that event is rapidly approaching.

Satan is now restricted to the earth only and will wreak terror and death on the people of the world, especially the Jewish nation. Rev 12:15-17.

"15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

But God has already arranged for protection of His people, the earth and a prepared and protected place, some think this may be Petra. Rev 12:6.

"6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

God gives special protection for the Jewish people for the second half of the seven year Tribulation period, three-and-half-years.

The Mark of the Beast.

Rev 13:16,17.

As part of his control of the people on earth, the False Prophet will institute a mark / tattoo on each person on their right hand or forehead, without this "Mark of the Beast" the person will be unable to work, buy or sell anything. The mark of the Beast will identify them as followers of the Antichrist

Those who refuse to have this mark will be shut out of the societies products and services, they will face starvation.

No one knows what form this mark of the beast will take, John gives a clue in Rev 13:18.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

This mark will be implemented in the middle of the seven-year tribulation period, so the effect will only be for three-and-half-years.

This number, 666, has generated many theories as to its meaning, John tells us it is "the meaning of a man." The Bible often uses six in connection with humanity and seven when involving God, but no one as yet knows the real meaning of the mark.

However, with modern technology we can see how there could be world control through some sort of micro chip or similar implanted in each person, this technology is already available and being used today. Technically there is nothing which will prevent the time of the Tribulation happening.

We may not be able to work out the meaning but the Bible tells us what will happen to all who have this mark.

Rev 14:9-11.

"9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

For those who refused the mark the following will occur, Rev 20:4.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Israel and the Antichrist.

Israel and the Antichrist make a covenant. In prophecies "a week" signifies a week of years, ie. seven years.

Daniel 9:25-27 to Daniel 11:39.

"25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he

shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Early in the beginning of the Tribulation period, the Antichrist signs an agreement with Israel, to protect them and give them peace for seven years.

This world ruler becomes more powerful with time, performing amazing signs and miracles.

He then takes the next step, breaks the Jewish covenant and declares himself a god and uses the Jewish Temple as the place to worship him. The Antichrist will generate so much discount in the world that many nations will setup military forces to rebel against him, starting with the "king of the south," Africa, followed by the "king of the North" Daniel 11;40.

"40 And at the **time of the end** shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over."

When the sixth angel pours out his vial the way from the Eastern nations becomes open. An army of two hundred million on its way. Rev 9:16.

The Last Stages

Rev 15:1

"I And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

We now see seven angels with the last plagues of God. The seven last plagues appear to fall under the seventh and last trumpet. The work of these plagues is to finish the destruction of Antichrist and his world power.

In heaven we can see the spectators and witnesses who had been able to get their victory over the beast as the seven angels prepare to carry out the commission of God.

While they wait they give praise to the greatness of God's works, and

the justice and truth of His love for Mankind, both for those who turned to Him and His destruction of His enemies. They rejoiced in hope, and the coming end to the action of God on those who rejected Him. They call upon all nations to turn to God, to fear Him and give Him the glory, and worship Him.

"2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

The temple of God now opens and seven angels with the plagues leave, as they pass one of the four beast of God they are given seven vials containing the wrath of God, which is to be poured out, with the plagues, upon the earth.

The Vials and Plagues.

The angels are now instructed to pour out their vials upon the earth. The effect of each vial is terrible.

Rev 16:1-21.

1st Vial, v2.

"fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

foul and evil (possibly malignant) sore. Probably a plague of ulcers.

2nd Vial,v3.

"The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea." The salt water of blood would not be drinkable and would soon smell terrible.

3rd Vial,v4.

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."

Possibly it would be drinkable but they deserve to drink the blood because they shed the blood of saints and prophets.

4th Vial, v8,9.

"8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."

One of the side effects of this very hot sun will be to have a very large affect on the world's climate, a lack of rain everywhere and in addition the heat would melt all of the ice covered land and areas of the world, which would result in a massive sea level rise.

5th Vial,v10,11.

"10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Direct action on the place where the Antichrist was, yet the people still did not repent.

6th Vial,v12-16.

"12 And 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."

The armies of the nations of the Far East, like China, can now easily march West towards Armageddon by this supernatural drying up of the Euphrates River.

"13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For 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."

Though the Antichrist has controlled the world it appears that many countries want to remove his power and are getting armies to attack him.

The three spirits of devils must be messengers sent out into the world who support the Antichrist and to pursuade them to send armies to Armageddon.

"15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." v15, A timely warning to every man to be on his guard for the coming tribulation.

"16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Rev 17:14-18.

"14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where

the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The 7th Vial,v17-21.

"17 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.

18 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.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities 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.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 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." The vials are poured out into the air suggesting everywhere is affected.

The final stage of the seventh trumpet, the voice from the temple must be that of God, the mystery of God will now be finished, completed.

"17 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.

18 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.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities 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.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 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."

Babylon.

The scriptures have referred to Babylon since the beginning, it has always been a city against God. BABYLON THE GREAT. The city of Babylon was on the Euphrates River, but there seem to be a symbolic reference to the city of Rome.

The Persians captured Babylon in 539 b.c. <u>Dan. 5:30,31</u>. In 514 Darius partially destroyed the walls of the city. Later Xerxes finally destroyed the walls and temples of Babylon in 478. There have been many attempts to rebuild the city but have been unsuccessful. Note that at the end of the twentieth century Iraq made another attempt at the restora-

tion.

Biblical students feel that the Bible indicates that the Antichrist will move the world commercial system into a rebuilt Babylon. Rev 17:1-6.

- "I And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:
- 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
- 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
- 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
- 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABY-LON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOM-INATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: "

The attack on the city of Babylon by many nations is recorded in <u>Jeremiah 50:9,10</u>

"9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.

10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD."

Rev 18:8-10.

"8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

If the world commence had been all through Babylon, when the city is destroyed think of the effect it would have on world trade and finance systems.

The destruction of Babylon will be part of the judgement of God, but he will use human armies as his weapons.

Read <u>Rev 18:1-24</u> to see greater detail on "Babylon," what it has done to the world and the result of the judgement of God upon it.

Heaven rejoices.

The center of commerce and control of the Antichrist empire has been destroyed, in heaven there is joy as we see the final stages of God's plan coming into completion, proving that He keeps His promises, "For true and righteous are his judgments:" He keeps His Word.

Rev 19:1-6.

- "I And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:
- 2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.
- 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.
- 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.
- 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as

the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Armageddon.

People often refer to "Armageddon", but do not realize that it is a real place in Northern Israel, an ideal battlefield apparently.

Stage 1

Armageddon is the place where the Antichrist will gather the armies for the final destruction of the Jewish nation. The Bible does not indicates as to when during the second half of the tribulation this takes place, but it all ends at the end of the seven years of the tribulation.

Following the sixth vial/bowl of judgement, <u>Rev 16:12-16</u>, the Antichrist assembles his armies at Armageddon

As the Antichrist moves his armies to Armageddon, some of his enemies attack and destroy Babylon and then move on to Armageddon to attack the armies of the Antichrist.

Stage 2

The final Stage of Armageddon is the second coming of Christ to destroy the Antichrist and all his supporters.

Rev 19:11-21.

- "11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in right-eousness he doth judge and make war.
- 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
- 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.
- 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
- 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
- 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. "

Jesus Christ come down from heaven with His army of angels and the True Believers, but they do not have to fight, just words from the mouth of Jesus destroys.

An angel invites the birds to come and feast upon the bodies of the dead followers of Satan.

Rev 19:17,18.

"17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. "

All the armies of the world, with the mark of the beast, join together to fight the army of God but they cannot win against the power of God through His Son Jesus.

Rev 19:19-21.

"19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Rev 14:9-11.

"9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the pres-

ence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

According to the Bible, Christ could come to collect His True Believers, His bride, the church, at any time. Any one left behind will have to endure the horrors of the tribulation given above.

If you have never personally asked Jesus to become your Saviour from sin, then you need to turn to Him and accept His gift of forgiveness right now. You will be ready for the rapture then.

Why on earth would someone be so stupid as to prefer to go through the time of Tribulation when they can accept the pardon offered by God through Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:13.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."