

Lester Sumrall

***PANORAMA* of
PROPHECY**

God's Revelations to Mankind



PANORAMA
OF
PROPHECY

Dr. Lester Sumrall

All Scriptures are taken from the
King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to The Panorama of Prophecy

It will amaze you to learn that Enoch, in just the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied that the Lord would come to earth with ten thousand of His saints to judge everyone (Jude 14-15). He saw the end of time that we are living in today. And he told us that the Lord is coming to execute judgement upon all wicked people.

It is amazing that millions of Americans don't believe these words. The majority of them have lost touch with God and His Word. When I was growing up, if you told me there would come a time when you could not pray or read the Bible in school, I would have thought you were crazy. We have changed; we are not the same kind of people we once were. We are a sinful nation!

Most of the people in this country today don't believe that abortion is wrong. Millions of Americans think it is all right to kill babies in the womb. I will prophecy to you the time will come when old people will be killed in this country as well. We have the biggest bunch of nuts in this generation that any generation ever had. It's no wonder Enoch said the Lord would come to earth and judge everyone!

Noah was also a very special person and a tremendous prophet. This man had one message for his generation. He said to everyone, “If you don’t get right in the eyes of the Lord, He will send a flood and destroy you.” But the people didn’t want to hear that, so they continued living in their sins. Then the fatal flood came, just as Noah prophesied (2 Pet. 2:5).

We had better listen to the prophets! Our safety depends on it.

Prophecy Prompts Purity

One of the most exciting topics in the world today is prophecy. Even people who do not know God want to hear what the Bible has to say about prophecy.

It is interesting to notice immediately that one-fourth of the whole Bible is taken up with prophecy. That single fact makes it the most astounding book in the world. There’s no book on earth that contains so many fulfilled prophecies, as well as many others that remain to be accomplished. That means one out of every four words in the Bible is a prophetic word. So, if God took so much time that every fourth word in His Book was prophetic, then you and I should give a lot of attention to it.

A large percentage of the world has a *curious* feeling about prophecy, but not a *spiritual* feeling. Prophecy should do more than answer some of your questions, it should change your heart. For instance, the Bible says that people who believe in the prophecy of Jesus’ return to earth will purify themselves (1 John 3:2-3). This means that prophecy offers us more than *information*. It also presents us with incentives for *transformation*. Therefore, our purpose in teaching this subject is not just to educate your brain so you will know the things that are going to come to pass. Instead, the purpose of this study is to tenderize our hearts so we will

be ready when Jesus comes. I intend to be ready when the Lord returns. And it is Bible prophecy that will help us to live a good holy life.

Bible prophecy does not consist only of dates—when something will happen. It has a lot more to do with the spiritual condition of our lives, with the church and with the world than it does with the forecasting of events and time tables for when they will take place.

How can we know the Bible is true? The answer is simple. We know the Scriptures are true because they predict and predict and predict one event after another, then all of these predictions come to pass. In this way we understand the Bible to be the word of God, and not just a newspaper.

A Prophecy from Jesus

One of the greatest verses in the Bible is John 14:29. Here, Jesus is speaking, and he says, *I have told you before it comes to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.* You say, “What in the world was he a talking about?” Well, he was talking about his resurrection. He said, “I’m telling you that in three days after my crucifixion I’m going to rise again. I’m telling you this information before it comes to pass so you might believe my message to you.”

There’s a lot truth in here. Jesus doesn’t expect you just to gobble up something that somebody says. Jesus himself said, “I tell you this before it comes to pass, not that after it has come to pass, so you will believe in me.”

In the last days I believe the total five-fold ministry is going to be powerful. I don’t mean in just a little way, but I mean in a wonderful way there will be apostles, and you won’t have to say, “Is he one?” You won’t have to ask, “Why doesn’t he carry the name of apostle?” I think a real apostle is not worried about the title at all, so if you try to designate him as one, he’ll say, “Just forget it. Watch the fruit.”

There are people going around today calling themselves “prophets.” When you see someone put the word “Prophet” in front of his name, you can be sure he’s full of what Lucifer got thrown out of heaven for—pride. We don’t need titles. We need experience . . . action . . . blessing and anointing, but we don’t need titles. That’s like Phariseeism in the New Testament. The Pharisees were very, very eager to get a high name. Remember, Ananias and Sapphira fell dead in that first church of Jerusalem because they wanted a name, like Barnabas received (Acts 5:1-11). It cost them their lives! So, when people come around and say, “Look at me; I’m this or that,” disregard them completely because it’s vanity that is in their heart.

I don’t even like to be called “pastor.” You say, “Why don’t you like to be called pastor?” Well, I’m not real sure I am a pastor. A pastor is someone who cares for the sheep, and if I’m a pastor the fruit of it will be present and I won’t need the title. If the fruit of it is there, that’s what you go by. There are a lot of people in pulpits who call themselves “pastor,” and they are no more a pastor than they are a jack rabbit. They don’t know anything about taking care of God’s children . . . healing them when their hurt . . . laying hands upon them and blessing them . . . inspiring them . . . lifting them up to their feet . . . and so on.

There are people who call themselves an “evangelist,” but they can’t hold a revival crusade . . . they can’t get anybody saved.

Titles are not what the world needs. The world today needs ministry . . . the world today needs for us to be a fruit of what we are. You ask, “What do I want people to call me?” I want you to call me, “Brother.” I’m sure of that. I may not be sure of being an apostle but I’m sure of being a brother. Don’t follow the vanity of men in trying to have a title stuck over you.

We are Commanded to Study Prophecy

In 2 Timothy 2:15 we read these words: *Study to shew yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* That's quite a bit different from what many people think. Lots of folks study to make themselves successful or to make more money. They study so they might have a keen mind and be able to answer people's questions. But here the Bible says we are to study so we can be approved of God. Isn't that amazing? We should study in order to be approved by God.

In other words, if you don't have time to be diligent in God's Word, then you won't have the approval of God on your life. Are you listening? How many of you actually love the word of God?

If we do not understand and master the doctrines of eschatology and the dispensations, we will not rightly divide Scripture. Prophecy is a marvelous word from God, and we must study it in order to understand it.

The Bible is not just for us to pick up casually and read as a casual thing. Instead, the Bible is God's textbook, and it is placed upon this earth to guide us from here to the pearly gates. Its God's road map, telling us to go in a particular direction so we'll make it safely home.

Prophecy is a heritage for us. It's a heritage handed down to us by God. You can't kill the Bible. You can't destroy the Bible. Empires have risen for thousand of years and opposed God's Book, but they can't destroy this volume. Look at Hitler. He attempted to destroy it, but now he's gone. Look at Stalin, he hated the Bible, but now he's dead and in hell. An atheist in France said that in a hundred years there wouldn't be a single Bible in his nation, but I visited his house, which is now owned by the British Foreign Society, and from the basement to the attic it is loaded with Bibles. God has a way of mocking man when he comes against His

word. So we study prophecy as a part of our heritage so we will know how to live, how to die and how to reach heaven.

Prophecy Can Be Abused

When I was a little boy, there was great controversy: Will there ever be a Jewish nation? All the modern churches said, “No; it’s impossible because the Jews are located all over the world. You can’t possibly expect them to return to their native land.” They were speculating, but the Bible says they will indeed come back. Well, those speculators are all dead now, and the Jews have a nation in the Promised Land, just as Bible prophecy predicted!

Prophecy can be abused by false prophets. We are loaded with them in this country right now. They say, “God told me this, and God said that,” but they never really heard anything from God. I want to tell you something, when God speaks, he doesn’t address just an individual. Instead, He speaks to us for the benefit of the church. It’s more than a *personal* word; it’s a *collective* message. Everything God has ever told me in my life was both for myself and for the body of Christ. Be careful who you listen to!

A Person Must be Converted to Christ

In Order to Have a True Perception of Prophecy

The only thing the Pharisees and Sadducees ever agreed on was fighting Jesus. They were the religious fundamentalists and liberals of their day. The Pharisees were legalistic, and the Sadducees didn’t even believe in the resurrection or in miracles. Both groups had a good name in their society, but they didn’t have a good name with God. They had no real place for God in their hearts, and God had no place for them either.

These two groups tested Jesus and demanded a sign from him. So, Jesus said to them, “You can understand when the

sky is red in the morning that you are going to have a bad day, and when the sky is red in the evening that you are going to have a good day the next day. If you can understand these natural signs, why can't you understand I'm the Son of God standing before you?" In other words, Jesus is accusing them of having no spiritual discernment. The people of the world are like that. They understand *material* things better than *spiritual* things. They can understand how to go to the moon, but they don't know how to go to Calvary! Therefore, it's your business and my business to teach people the way to God!

I Corinthians 2:13-14 says, *Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him.* You see, if you were to tell people today that the Bible predicted famine in the last days, they wouldn't believe it. They would only say, "We have always had droughts." They are just like the people in Noah's day. They did not understand until the flood came and took them, even though Noah preached to them for a hundred years. They lacked spiritual insight because they refused to believe God's message through Noah.

"The natural man receiveth not the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them." I'm not cooking up words. This is what the Bible teaches. The people who are not believers cannot understand God's prophecies because they are spiritually discerned. You have to be born again to understand spiritual things. The natural man, the unregenerate man, does not have the ability to understand the signs of the times. He may be educated. He may be cultured. But he cannot discern spiritual things. He has no spiritual capacity until he is born again.

The Holy Spirit Reveals Things to Come

The Holy Spirit is the Source of all true prophecy. Revelation 1:1 says, *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.* God the Father gave the contents of the book of Revelation to Jesus, and Jesus passed it on to an angel, and the angel gave it to John. Throughout this whole process we know that the Holy Spirit was directly involved because He is the ultimate Author of prophecy and the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Bible didn't come from man, from human thinking. Instead, the Holy Spirit used a human vessel to get it to us. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God. He knows the past. He knows the present. And He knows the future. He's eternal and immortal. He alone knows what's going to happen in prophecy.

Christians are Dependent on the Holy Spirit

When it comes to the understanding prophecy, if we rely solely on our own brains, we will go astray. But if the Holy Spirit dominates our thinking, we're going to think correctly about the future.

John 16:13, says *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.* You ought to memorize that verse. Here's an illustration that will help you understand this Scripture.

Mr. Howard Carter of London, England, was a great man of God, and he invited me to travel with him on a missionary trip around the world. However, I neglected to give him an address where I could be reached, so I lost track of him in the same hour that I found him. Through the word of

wisdom God revealed to me that I would find Howard Carter in Australia. So, with twelve dollars in my pocket, I boarded a steamer outside of San Francisco, and it transported me several thousand miles over twenty-one days to a port in New Zealand.

I was very weary of travel, and was glad to get off that boat and place my feet on solid ground. I wondered to myself, “Where should I begin my search for Howard Carter?” We were to have a thirty-six hour stopover there, while the boat unloaded and loaded supplies. I did not know that as I left that steamer and walked down the gang plank that Howard Carter was in the mountainous interior of New Zealand teaching at a ministers retreat. Before I got up the next morning, Howard Carter was praying. He said, “God, where is the young man who is supposed to meet in California?” God replied, “I haven’t lost track of him. Your traveling companion is not lost; he’s in Wellington, New Zealand, right now in a boat. He’ll be getting off the boat tomorrow morning, and he will go and find a church there. I want you to send the Wellington pastor home from the retreat with a note for Lester Sumrall when he arrives.” Howard Carter hadn’t heard from me in three months. He may have thought I was still in America. But God knew otherwise.

When I got to Wellington, I wasn’t going to wait around to meet people. I trounced up and down the hills searching for a Full-Gospel church. I found the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, and the Salvation Army churches, then I finally met a man on the street and said, “Is there anybody in this town that shouts “Hallelujah” in church? He said, “Yes,” and he directed me to its location. I crossed the railroad tracks, climbed a little hill, and spotted it—a lovely little white church. Next to it was a charming small house that I assumed was the parsonage. While I was walking to the church, the pastor and his wife were inside, waiting and

wondering if someone was really going to show up, even though Howard Carter had told them that the Holy Spirit would bring this young man to their house. He even told them that this man would arrive at eleven o'clock in the morning, and that is exactly the time I got there. I knocked on the door, and the pastor said "Yes?" I said, "Sir, you don't know me . . ." then he interrupted me and said, "Yes, I know you. You're Lester Sumrall!"

I said, "How could you know me? I have never written to anyone in this country, and I don't know your name. How could you know me?" He said, "Howard Carter is in this country. Here is a note from him." The note said, "Mr. Sumrall, continue on to Australia and minister there. I will meet you in Sydney." That's what I did, and we met in Sydney. Do you see now how we must depend on the Holy Spirit?

The Bible is the Ultimate Prophetic Guide

2 Peter 1:19-21 says, *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Do you think this world can get much darker? If you're following astrology, you're on your way to hell. But if you'll follow the day star, the Lord Jesus Christ, he will arise in your hearts and take you all of the way to heaven! That's worth shouting about because he knows what he's talking about. It's about time America awoke to God!

Chapter 2

What is Prophecy?

In the eighteenth century prophecy may not have been so exciting, but this is the opening of the twenty-first century, and it is exciting indeed. It gets more exciting every day.

Our lesson today is entitled, “What is Prophecy?” I think this is essential information because a lot of people don’t know what were discussing, so it is imperative that we understand what prophecy is. Our whole world today staggers from crisis to crisis, and each year they become more critical. Do they have a prophetic significance? The answer is a resounding “Yes.”

Can the Bible help us to untangle the knotted affairs of our world? I believe the Bible has the answers to the critical problems and puzzling questions regarding the times in which we live. Just listen to Isaiah 46:9-11. *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure . . . I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*

There just isn’t anyone else like the Lord, and proof for this fact is found in prophecy: He declares the end from the

beginning. No one else can do that. Even so-called gods cannot do that. There isn't a single person living on this earth who knows what will be happening on this earth next week. There are a lot of people who would like to know, including the President, but no human being can predict the future. It's beyond our ability. However, God says to us, "I declare the end from the beginning." He alone can tell us what the end is going to be like.

Paganism practices all of the rituals of the occult, and they are more prevalent in the world today than ever before. And what is the occult all about? One thing: trying to find out the future. But you can't learn the future from the occult. To know what will happen in the future you must turn to God and to the Bible.

What is Prophecy?

Prophecy is the foretelling of events before they come to pass. Prophecy is history pre-written (or written in advance of the events themselves). This is an amazing thing.

Not very many years ago, if you would have told people that communism would fall on its face, they would have said you're crazy. But suddenly it happened. The world changed. And it changed without a gun or a battle. Instead, the communistic world simply bowed itself before the Lord of all history. Today, these formerly communistic nations permit Bibles to be distributed throughout their lands!

Prophecy is not vague or uncertain speculation. Instead, it is confirmation . . . it is proof that there is a God, and that this God knows the future.

Prophecy Benefits the Human Heart

Prophecy benefits the human heart by bringing to it a great joy. Look at what's happening today. I am very excited about all the fulfillments of prophecy in the world. Maybe

I'm more excited about this single thing than anything else. I get tired of talking about yesterday and today. I want to talk about tomorrow, too. Well, prophecy makes that possible.

Everyone desires to know the future. We want to understand mystery. We long to relieve themselves of fears. We hope for better days. We want to know how to plan for our future.

Man has employed various non-spiritual methods in trying to know the future, such as dreams, spiritism, consultation of oracles, and speculation. And all of these are to no avail regarding the future. That's not the way to plan your life or your future. We should plan it by the Word of God.

God Alone Reveals the Future

God alone knows the future, so He is the only one who can reveal the future. More than that, He is the only one who can make that prediction to come to pass.

God desires to reveal the future to those who will believe in Him. For example, He said to Abraham, *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I shall do (Genesis 18:17)?* God was in Abraham's tent talking with him. Actually, the Lord was on his way to Sodom to destroy it when He said to the patriarch, "I'm going to have to destroy Sodom because of its wickedness and because of its A.I.D.S. problem, otherwise the whole human race will die of this deadly disease." So, you can see that God told Abraham what would happen in the future.

Amos 3:7 is another great scripture you ought to mark. *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.* Isn't that amazing? God will do nothing without first telling His prophets what He intends to do. That's prophecy.

Down in the heart of Brazil I came upon a large colony of people. They had their business areas, and they had their

farms. I preached for those people in a big beautiful church they had constructed. I asked them, “Where are you from?” They said, “Lithuania, in Europe.” “What are you doing here in the remotest part of Brazil?” I asked. They said, “God spoke to us through prophets. They warned us that if we did not get up and leave this country, Russia would control it. Atheism would be our new faith. Anyone who loved God or the church would be put in prison. So, hundreds of us left for Brazil. When we got here, we went to the interior, cut down the trees, built homes, and started a new life.”

We thoroughly enjoyed being with these people in the middle of the Brazilian jungle. This was a thriving community. But while I was there, Stalin was doing just exactly what the prophets in Lithuania had predicted. Their nation went to war with Russia, and their country was taken over by people who wouldn’t permit them to own a Bible or worship in public.

Now, that’s what prophecy is! Prophecy is when God speaks through a person, and he says this is what’s going to come to pass.

The same thing happened in Armenia. God spoke to a group of people and told them that if they stayed there, they would come under the bondage of communism and atheism. So, they got on boats and came to the United States. They became some of the most prosperous people on the west coast of our nation. Once I met with them, and they told me how many of their former countrymen were killed and run into poverty. But now, because of God’s prophets, they were safe and prosperous!

Christ is the Center of Prophecy

The first prophecy in the Bible is located in Genesis 3:15. Here the Lord himself prophesied that the seed of woman (that is, a future son from a woman) would bruise the

head of the devil. Four thousand years later the Lord Jesus Christ, on Calvary, bruised Satan's head by destroying the power of sin. Hallelujah! That's what prophecy's all about: Christ dying for our sins, Christ rising from the dead, Christ defeating the devil, and Christ returning to earth as the King of all kings!

When you think prophetically, think of Jesus first. Don't think about visions of heads and horns; that's where you may miss the point. If you look at the book of Revelation again, you'll notice the Bible says this: *the revelation of Jesus Christ*. This is what prophecy is about: Christ. Christ is the center of prophecy.

After John the apostle had been shown the amazing things that you find in the book of Revelation, from chapter 1 right straight through until chapter 19, he says this: *I fell down at his feet to worship him*. (This is referring to the person who had been showing John these mighty revelations.) *And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* (19:10).

Here's an angel who regarded himself as a servant of Jesus, and he had the job of showing another servant of Jesus the total book of Revelation. How amazing! What a responsibility and what an honor!

This is an interesting line: *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. In other words, when you witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, you're functioning in the heartbeat of prophecy. Why? Because Jesus is coming soon and all the prophecies in the Bible relate to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to be King of kings and Lord of lords. So, when you and I are dealing with prophecy, we are dealing with the testimony of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection and return to earth.

You can't be a good prophet without talking about Jesus because he is the spirit of prophecy. Acts 10:43 says, *To him [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Everything goes right back to Christ and to your salvation. This is the very heart and center of all prophecy.

Much of the Past was Prophesied

Many times God said something would come to pass, and then it did just that. For example, the Lord spoke prophetically about the flood in Noah's day: *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them* (Genesis 6:7). God predicted it, and it happened exactly as He said it would.

In Luke 21:24 Jesus prophesied the coming destruction of Jerusalem: *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* In A.D. 70, the city of Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Roman army, just as Jesus predicted. Then the city continued to remain under Gentile rule until God decided it was time for their control to end. Do you know when the "times of the Gentiles" was fulfilled? It was fulfilled when Israel became its own country with its own flag—May 14, 1948. That means we are living in the termination of the Gentile dispensation. We are living in an age of fulfilled prophecy!

In Isaiah 13:19 it says this: *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.* Take a few days and simply study the riches and the glory of Babylon. There's never been an empire so great as that remarkable

empire. But it didn't last long. When Isaiah was living, no one expected it to collapse. Everyone thought it would last forever. But it is only rubble today. Everything God said has come to pass. You can trust what God says. If He says something is going to happen, then it's going to happen!

What Prophecy Does to the Human Heart

This is perhaps the most important thing you can learn in this chapter: looking into prophecy can purify your heart. Isn't that amazing? Let's look at it in 1 John 3:3. *Every man that hath his hope in him purifieth himself.*

When you live casually for the world, it's because you don't have any hope of Jesus coming soon. But when you know Jesus is coming back, you live differently. Do you know why I live like I do today? It's because I know Jesus is going to return soon. I don't mess with the world. I don't go to worldly places. I don't drink wine, and I don't drink beer. I am not contaminated with anything in this world. I belong to Jesus and I do whatever he tells me to do. If you can truly get this prophetic hope inside of you that Jesus is coming back, your heart will become purified as well.

The church in this country is playing games with eternity. I wish to God I could wake you up. Most professing believers seem to possess no conscience. They do as they please; they go where they please. One day we are all going to meet the Master and give an account for every thought and every deed throughout our lifetimes. That's a prophetic reality, and we'd better be ready!

I live in the light of eternity every day. If I say I'm going to do something, I'll do it because I know someday I'm going to face God and give Him an account of my actions. I don't do this or that to please people, and I don't even do it to please myself. I do it in the fear of God that I'm going to stand before Him and give an account of my life. Amen?

The Present World Crisis is Prophetic

God has revealed in His Word that Russia will rise and fall. Did you know that? You can read about it in Ezekiel 38.

God also says in the Bible that the Jews will return to Israel. Look at Isaiah 11:12. *And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.* Isn't that amazing? When my family lived there, we met many Jews who had come from all over the world to reside in this newly formed nation.

I met a Jew, and he was from India. I said, "What are you doing here?" He told me God put it inside of him to return to his country. Then I met Jews from China, and they said the same thing: "The Lord told me to go home. So I came back to Jerusalem."

Do you understand what's happening? That's an act of God fulfilling prophecy in our day. It's a miracle. Rejoice! Hallelujah! Are you glad you're saved? Are you glad you can understand prophecy? Praise God!

Chapter 3

The First Prophecy Given on This Earth

The basic way to teach anything is to begin at it's beginning, so we will begin with the first prophecy ever given on earth. It was necessary for this one prophecy to be the first prophecy because from this first prophetic word we get an understanding of how to interpret future prophecies.

The first prophecy is a very important one as it is the birth of prophecy. Therefore, it must and should relate to the Lord Jesus your Savior. In Genesis 3:15 it says this: *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

The manifestation of Lucifer to this woman was through what the Bible calls a serpent. In the original Hebrew it doesn't have the sounding that it does in English. Originally, this creature did not crawl on its belly. It wasn't what you call a snake today. Instead, it was one of the wisest creatures that God had made. That explains why Lucifer saw fit to deceive Eve through this creature.

Because Satan used the serpent to speak to Eve, God said there would be a hatred between snakes and women. If there's anybody who should literally fight evil, it's women. They should be gladiators against the deceits of the devil.

God said, "I'll put hatred between the two of you, and this enmity will never cease." More than that, He said that this enmity would be between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. In other words, the offspring of Eve (the human race) and the offspring of the serpent (more snakes) would perpetuate this hatred. But it's deeper than that. This explains only the *natural* side to the story. There is another dimension here—a *spiritual* side.

We would probably miss the deeper message here if it weren't for the words of the Lord Jesus. When he addressed some evil (but religious) people, he said this to them: *Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire* (John 8:43-44a). He was talking to two-legged creatures, human beings, and he told them that they had been sired by the devil himself!

When the Lord refers to "your seed," He is speaking about the sinners who would have Satan as their father. And when He refers to "her seed," He is talking about the believers who would have God as their Father.

The seed of the woman stands for all of the born again Christians in the whole earth, and it is that seed which will bruise the head of the serpent (Satan). More specifically, it is the Lord Jesus Christ (as the ultimate seed of the woman) who would bruise Satan's head. "Bruising the head" means to remove from leadership. Jesus would crush Satan's headship over creation. And that's exactly what he did! Four thousand years later this prophetic word came to pass

From the book of Genesis through Malachi, every prophet that rose up spoke of Jesus. They spoke about his

eternal nature, his birth, his sinless life, his ministry, his death and his resurrection. The details grew with each prophet, until the hour Jesus came out of that tomb the third day and began to scream, “All power in heaven and earth have been given unto me! I have the keys . . . I have the keys to the kingdom!” Satan and sinners bruised his heel, but he bruised their head!

The Creator Delivered the First Prophecy

I think this is very important. I always like to talk to the top man; you get disappointed otherwise. You pour out your heart to a junior executive, and he says, “I’ve got to ask upstairs if they like it or not.” By the time he gets to his bosses, he’s forgotten half of what you’ve said, then added two thirds of what he wanted to say. Well, the first prophecy ever uttered was not spoken by some minor official, but by God the Father himself, and He made sure that it was not diluted or polluted!

This one was fresh off the heart of God. It came right out of his spirit and soul. It came out of His love for Adam and Eve, in spite of the sin they had committed. He basically said to them, “I’ve got good news for you . . . good news in the darkest day of your life. Little woman, you’re so ashamed of yourself, you don’t know what to do. Well, I’ve got good news. You and your seed will bruise his head!” Ahhhh! What a good feeling she must have had. She was going to have a comeback. Are you glad for comebacks?

I’ve been doing them all my life. I’m always coming back. I’m like a rubber ball. Knock me down, and I’ll bounce higher next time because I believe in comebacks! It’s good to go up and down. When you’re down, you know how human you are, and when you get up, you can thank God for how good He is. It’s all right — downs and ups.

Most of the prophecies I have ever heard are aimed at lifting people up. There wouldn't be one percent of all the prophecy that I've ever heard in all my life that put people down. Isn't that nice? Ninety-nine percent of all the prophecies I have ever heard are lifters, they are encouragers. They give the devil a whop in the teeth, and they spur you on to do more. That's prophecy!

Notice something else. On the first day man was out of fellowship with God, the Lord uttered the first prophecy. That is so significant. God didn't wait a week. God didn't wait a month. God didn't wait a year. The first day that man was out of fellowship with God, He stepped in. Isn't that beautiful? God is not a waiter. He gets in there the moment you need His help. Have you found that to be true?

He's a God with an answer. God is not like some people in this world who have no answers to anything. God has an answer to everything. Can you say "Amen?"

Satan Tried to Annul the Prophecy and His Destruction

If you think a prophecy is going to go forth and not be challenged, you're wrong. The only prophecy that cannot come to pass is the one the devil stole from you. Isn't that terrible? God wants every prophecy to come to pass, but if you don't protect them enough with your love and your prayers and your persistence, they may not come about.

God has said to many young men, "I will bless you," but a large number of them are not blessed at all. They didn't walk in the ways of God so they could get that blessing. Instead, they disobeyed God, and so the devil came along and stole that prophecy from them. You can be sure that the devil played a major role in the deaths of Abel and Cain. Satan knew that one of Eve's offspring would crush his head, so he took the initiative to get rid of her children before one of them would destroy him.

A. Cain and Abel

In Genesis 4:7 God says to Cain, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.* Cain was intensely angry because his brother's offering to God had been accepted, but his was rejected. Listen, you're not going to give God some old broken down thing that you don't want and then expect to please Him.

Isn't it amazing that the first sin ever committed outside the Garden of Eden was not a political sin (nobody's trying to get in an office), and it wasn't an economic sin (nobody was stealing money). The first sin committed outside the Garden of Eden was a religious sin! I'm talking to me and you.

"If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." That word "lieth" there in the original Hebrew means "to crouch." The devil's a liar, and he's still crouching at your door. The Bible says we have an adversary who goes about like a lion, and he is seeking to devour anyone who isn't right with God. If you don't know that, you are going to be in trouble.

God said to this young man, "I want to tell you something. If you do well, you will be accepted, but if you do not do well, sin is crouching at your door, like a monster to eat you up." Sin crouches at the door, and it desires to have you. That's just like the devil. He crouches at your door, and he desires to have you, too. Isn't that awful? If I were you, I wouldn't permit that to happen. I'd cast him out and let Jesus' desires get inside of me. Can you say "Amen?"

Then God says, *Thou shalt rule over him.* We don't have to yield to sin or to Satan. We have authority, we have authority, we have authority, we have authority over the powers of the devil, and he can't do anything about it! But there's a catch. If you have authority and don't use it, the

devil will grab it. If you don't take authority over the devil, he will take authority over you. Do you hear me? It's time to resist the devil and make him flee!

When Cain killed his brother, it became clear that he would not be the one to bruise Satan's head. But soon afterward, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth. Do you see it? God's not a quitter. God is never a quitter. When God says a prophecy will come true, He keeps working on it.

B. Noah's Flood

Here's something else the devil did. He caused the flood to come in Noah's day by polluting the women's seed. In Genesis 6:1-4 it says this: *And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.*

There was enormous corruption in Noah's day. It continued year after year, until God finally screamed, "My spirit shall not always strive with men." And so he shortened man's life from a thousand years to a hundred and twenty years. Later, in David's day, He reduced it again, this time to seventy years.

There were giants in the earth in Noah's time because the sons of God married the daughters of men. As a result of this forbidden union the children they created became giants. Their heads were twice the size of a normal human's head, and they had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot.

It was this contamination of the blood of women that brought about the flood. God intended to bring a Savior through a women so he could crush Satan's head, but Satan intended to prevent that from happening by polluting woman's seed. If he could accomplish that objective, he could keep God's prophecy from being fulfilled. But God had other plans. Noah and his family were not polluted. They were pure, and God sent the flood to protect them from the rest of the human race that had become completely corrupted.

C. Tower of Babel

Next, we see the devil uniting people to create a way to heaven without God. This is the story in the Bible about the tower of Babel (Genesis 11). The devil put it in the hearts of men that God would send another flood. So, to protect themselves they plotted to build a tower so high that the flood waters could never reach the top. They were basically saying this to themselves: "Let's build our own way to heaven. We don't need God anyway." The Tower of Babel was just another expression of rebellion in the hearts of men. It was the voice of humanism saying that we can get along without God. We can do things that God can't stop, and we don't need him for our salvation.

In verses 6-9 it says, *And the LORD said, Behold, the people are one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth: and they ceased building the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel: because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

Those people who don't understand the Trinity ought to read things like that. The text says, "let us" go down. In the very beginning of the Bible it says, "Let us make man in our own image" (Genesis 1:26-27). This is the Trinity. This is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit! Working together, the Trinity would come down and confound the language of the people.

Now you know, if you put two people on the same job and one speaks Japanese and the other speaks Indian, they're not going to accomplish much. They're going to mess up what the other one's doing, and they're going to have quarrels because they have a misunderstanding of speech. In order to have a perfect operation you've got to have people who are talking the same language.

When the little nation of Israel was born in 1948, the greatest problem they had was communication. They had Jews from a hundred and one countries living together, and the only language they somewhat had in common was English. So the men who formed that nation said, "We're going to talk one tongue in this nation!" So, they enlisted everybody they could find to teach Hebrew to the people. They had night classes for the whole population, and in twenty years they had a whole nation speaking one tongue. That's one of the reasons why they have the greatness they have. Any country that has several languages is going to be limited. Canada has its problems with a double language, and there are people in the United States who would like to confuse our country with a dual language. You can't be great with dual languages. You've got to have a unity of speech in order to be great. You've got to understand each other perfectly in order to rise up to greatness.

The people at the Tower of Babel were great because they spoke one language and worked together as though they were one person. But their greatness was in evil. So

God judged them by giving them different languages and scattering them around the world.

It's very remarkable to discover that almost all the problems man has today are the result of transgression against God. You see, the reason we have multiple languages is because of transgression against God. It came because men rebelled against God. Almost every sorrow you have on the face of the earth comes from a direct rebellion against God. If we could get people to stop rebelling against God, then we could have a peaceful world!

In our country today, with all the rebellion we have between the males and the females, and all the rebellion we have about abortion, it really boils down to the simple fact that the hearts of people are against God. Every problem we have in this country is a sin problem. Study it carefully and you will find that every problem we have is because we have gone against God and against His Word!

What we're dealing with at the Tower of Babel is sin and Satan. The devil knows the first prophecy that's in the Bible. He knows that someone is going to be born who will crush his head. So, he figures if he can stop that from happening, he'll be safe. All he wants to do is keep the people from following God, hoping that this will break the prophecy that was made against him.

D. Sarah and Hagar

Now let's get to a very unusual point. It was Satan who caused Sarah not to conceive and have a son. In Genesis 16: 1-5 it says, *Now Sarai Abraham's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai, Abram's wife,*

took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong is upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

All of the problems in the Palestinian and Arab worlds today are due to the fact that Sarah and Abraham couldn't wait for God to fulfill His promise to them. The LORD promised them that they would have a son, but when the answer was delayed, they took matters into their own hands.

Abraham made a terrible mistake. He was a man of faith, but he made a terrible mistake here. His wife desperately wanted a baby, and when it seemed she couldn't have one, she told Abraham to have a child with her Egyptian servant. She said that she would call that baby her son. I just want to inform you that if somebody else has a baby, it's not yours. Abraham knew better. But he listened to his wife's advice, and the two kids he produced (one with Hagar and one eventually with Sarah) didn't do well.

The problem you see in the Middle East today is a family problem. The Arabs keep telling us to stay out of it because they've been fighting there for over three thousand years. They don't need Americans to tell them how to fight; they're very well experienced in it. They've hated each other for three thousand years, and they're still going after each other.

And so it was the work of Satan to do what? To destroy the seed of the woman that God had preordained should come through Abraham. Every time God chose a person through whom He would bring the Messiah, there's a war

in that family. I'm going to tell you right now that you had better obey God and resist the devil! Satan wants to keep you from God's promises and power. You must defeat him!

There was a missionary I knew in the orient who had a servant girl in the house. Once while his wife was away, he committed adultery with that servant girl. Then he did it again and again. She wasn't a servant anymore; she was a mistress, and she created problems in the home. I hope you hear what I'm saying. This kind of activity will only get you into trouble! It got Abraham's family in trouble, and it will do the same thing with you if you don't do what's right!

The devil knew that an Egyptian could not bring a Messiah into the world, so he closed the womb of Sarah and tempted her to substitute herself with her maiden. She yielded to that temptation, and Abraham did as well. The results were disastrous, but eventually God came to Abraham and Sarah again. He told them that they would have a child, and one year later that's precisely what happened.

It is always best to wait on God. Whenever God tells you something, hold on to it. Wait for it. And don't listen to the devil's schemes.

E. Other Examples

When Saul was made Israel's first king, he was a humble man. But the devil came to him and destroyed him. He put pride in his heart, he put greed in his heart, he put anger in his heart, and finally he caused him to take his own life. The devil fought him to the end because he assumed that the Messiah might come through this man's genealogy. When David was made king, the devil tempted him to commit adultery, hoping that this act might prevent the Messiah from being born. Later, he caused Athaliah to kill Israel's princes in an attempt to discontinue the promised seed-line. When this failed, Satan enticed Israel to intermingle

with the neighboring heathen nations. He even had John the Baptist executed to prevent the Christ from coming to Israel. However, in all of these attempts the devil failed. The prophecy *was* fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ!

The Divine Pattern

The initial prophecy of the Bible set the pattern of God's dealings with man and Satan. Let a man be a true man of God, and he will have battles he never dreamed. The devil will attack him, but if he will put his trust in Jesus, he will win. Tell the devil you're a winner! Don't ever concede! Don't ever quit! Don't ever say the burden is too hard!

Remember, prophecy destroys the forces of unbelief. It overthrows humanism, which teaches that man is his own god and savior. It overthrows the new age movement, which says that man can take care of himself without God. That is not true. Man needs a helper. Man needs a Savior. And that is exactly what we have in the fulfillment of the Bible's first prophecy. A Savior has come, and his name is Jesus!

Chapter 4

How Ordinary Men Predict the Future

It is a great honor to write regarding the future. About one third of the total Bible is related to future events. It's a prophetic book; it is the most remarkable prophetic book the world has ever known!

In Genesis 3:15 we saw that God first spoke prophetically to man. The day that man fell from grace, God said He would provide a redeemer, a person to rescue mankind and to crush Satan's head. That's the first prophecy ever spoken, and it was given by God himself.

After this, we see a remarkable thing: man will speak prophetically, as well. First, God spoke prophetically *to* man. Next, God speaks prophetically *through* man.

It's one thing for God to speak *to* man; it's another thing for Him to speak *through* men. Imagine that! God can use you as an instrument to foretell the future. In 2 Peter 1:21 it says, *Prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* You should never forget that Scripture because it tells you where prophecy comes from. It does not come from the ungodly. It comes from holy men. If a person isn't holy, don't you accept anything he says about the future.

According to Peter, prophecies did not come about by the desire of men, or the will of men, or the wisdom of men, but by holy men who loved God and served God. These are the men who were moved by the Holy Ghost to prophesy. This was true in the days of the Old Testament, and it is true in the days of the New Testament as well.

Adam Almost Lived Until Noah's Day

The first two sons upon this earth were Cain and Abel. Abel was slain by his own brother, and Cain was cursed by God for his act of murder. Next came Seth. He was born when Adam was 130 years old. Then, in Genesis 5:6 it says that Enosh, Adam's grandson, was born when Seth was 105 years old. According to Genesis 5:9, Kenan, Adam's great grandson, was born when Enosh was 90 years of age. In Genesis 5:12, Mahalalel, Adam's great, great grandson, was born when Kenan was 70 years old. And Genesis 5:15 says that Jared, Adam's great, great, great grandson, was born when Mahalalel was 65 years old. Then in Genesis 5:18 it says that Jared was the seventh from Adam. After him came Ench, and he was born when Jared was 162 years old.

All of these numbers add up to 622 years. Adam was still alive! Isn't that amazing? There's no mystery here. We know generation by generation by generation their names and all about them right from God's holy Word. For example, we know that Adam lived a total of 930 years. That means he lived with Enoch for 308 years! Isn't that amazing?

In Genesis 5:21 it states that Methuselah, the fifth great grandson of Adam, was born when Enoch was 65 years old. Then in Genesis 5:25 we see that Lamech, Adam's sixth great grandson, was born of Methuselah when he was 187 years old. Next, in Genesis 5:28 we discover that Noah, was the seventh great, great grandson of Adam; he was born when Lamech was 182 years old. This gives us another 434

years, plus the 622 years we mentioned earlier. This comes to a total of 1,056 years. Adam died only 126 years before Noah was born. Now you can see the connections; there's no slippage or blank spots. You can see for yourself what man was doing on the earth from the very beginning.

Enoch was the First Man on Record to Prophecy

In the seventh generation after Adam, Enoch was a prophet. He was the great, great, great, great grandson of the first human, and we have on record what he said about the future. Look at the book of Jude, verses 14-15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.* He prophesied about the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Can you imagine the seventh grandchild of Adam prophesying of Jesus coming back with tens of thousands of his saints? It's amazing. Prophecy can jump thousands of years, you see.

Enoch was no ordinary man. He was so good that God wouldn't even let him die. He was so good that he walked with God. Finally, God said to him one day, "Just come up like you are right now," and God translated him without him even having to face death! It is this man who saw the end of time. He could see the end of time that you and I are about to see. He could see God coming to execute judgment upon all of the wicked people on earth.

When I was a child growing up in this country, if you would have ever told me a time would come when you couldn't pray in school, I would have thought you were crazy. My teachers prayed in school everyday. I even had to stay after school sometimes for a whole hour because I failed to memorize a verse of Scripture that was assigned to us. We have changed as a nation. We've forgotten God's coming

judgments. We've forgotten about hell. We've forgotten the prophecy of Enoch.

Here is a man who lived so close to God that even before Noah's time he said the Lord God Almighty would come to execute judgment upon sinners. That's what's wrong with the world today; they are not convinced that Christianity is the right religion. They're not convinced they ought to be loyal to God. Even in my own home city three fourths of the so-called Christians do not attend church. Worse yet, most of the people in churches today don't believe that abortion is wrong. They kill babies and never blink! The time will come when they do the same thing to old people too. We've got the biggest bunch of nuts in this generation that has ever existed.

I just want you to see that God will come from heaven to execute judgment against everyone who lives in sin. Enoch spoke a prophetic word and wrote it down. It's been with us ever since. We'd better pay attention to it!

The Account of Methuselah

Methuselah was the son of Enoch. Notice what Genesis 5:21 says about this man: *At his death judgment will come.* This is the actual meaning of Methuselah's name. The day this little baby came out of the womb, he was given the name of "Methuselah," which means "at your death judgment comes." This means that Methuselah became a walking warning from God to man that at his death judgment would come.

Maybe you've never taken the time to read your Bible and notice how this prophecy came true. Let's look at it. When Methuselah was born, Enoch was 65 years old (Genesis 5:21). Enoch then lived 300 years after his son Methuselah was born, then God took him to heaven when was 365 years old (Genesis 5:22-24). Methuselah lived 187 years and had

a son by the name of Lamech (Genesis 5:25). Methuselah lived 782 years after his son's birth (Genesis 5:26). When Methuselah was 969 years old, he died (Genesis 5:27).

Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived on this earth. Now I used to wonder about that; I don't wonder anymore. You say, "Why did he live so long?" The answer is because of the mercy of God. He let everything live and live and live for a long time because He knew that when Methuselah died, He would have to judge the world. So He waited and waited a long time in order to give man an opportunity to get right with God. Isn't that amazing? That's the reason Methuselah lived so long. God is a good God, and God is a merciful God.

Now let me prove to you that the flood came in the year that Methuselah died. When Lamech (Methuselah's son) lived 182 years, he begat Noah (Genesis 5:28). Lamech lived 595 years after Noah was born (Genesis 5:30). Lamech was 777 when he died (Genesis 5:31). Noah was 600 years old when the flood came (Genesis 7:6), and Methuselah was 969 at the time of the flood. The very year that the flood came upon the earth was the year that Methuselah died. The record proves it. Do you see how this is a prophecy of the first magnitude? It took almost 1,000 years to be fulfilled, but we have irrefutable proof of its fulfillment!

God left us with a record; we're not without records. We have the records of what God has done on the face of this earth. Now you can see how amazing it is once you understand all the heritage of Noah and Methuselah.

Noah was a Prophet

Noah was a tremendous prophet. Genesis 6:8 says, *Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD*. This man had one message: "Turn back to God because a flood is coming." He said it everyday . . . everyday he prophesied there would be a

judgment from God in the form of a flood. In 2 Peter 2:5 it says this: *God spared not the old world, but he saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

Noah walked with God, and he walked with Him in the midst of evil. You know, often we say the world is so bad I can't help being bad. Now that is not true. Moses lived in the midst of the evils of Egypt, but he made the right decisions for his life. Noah did the same thing. And you must do it too.

Abraham was a Prophet

Now we come to a very great person; his name is Abraham. God told this man that through his seed there would come the Messiah. This is what it says in Genesis 12:2. *I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.* Today, after more than 3,000 years, the name of Abraham is still popular. He is loved by the Jews; he is loved by the Christians; and he is loved by the Muslims. No other person crosses cultures like Abraham. Eventually, one of his sons, by the name of Moses, wrote the first five books of the Bible. Can you see how Abraham and his seed have blessed people all over the world? So we see that this prophecy has come to pass.

The LORD also said this to Abraham: *Unto thy seed I will give this land (Genesis 12:7).* Now if God says you can have the land, it does not matter what anyone says. If God says it will come true, then it will come to pass just as He said. And it has. The Jews now live in the land promised to them by God. Now do you see how Abraham was a man who received great prophecies from God?

Moses was a Prophet

In Deuteronomy 18:17-18 it says, *And the LORD said unto me . . . I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* This was a great prophecy indicating that there would come another prophet, a prophet who would be much greater than Moses. God said He would put His own words into his mouth. That prophecy is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ. God spoke through Moses many times, but in this prophecy He said He would send another person, like Moses, with even more anointing. Isn't that exciting?!

David was a Prophet

Psalms 22:1 is just one example of David's prophetic ministry. Here is prophesied about the crucifixion of Jesus when he said, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* These are some of the very words Jesus spoke while he hung on the cross.

Daniel was a Prophet

In Daniel 2:23, 27-28 it says, *I thank thee, and praise thee, O Lord God of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou has now made known unto us the king's matter. Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wisemen, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers shew unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon your bed, are these.* And so Daniel proceeded to explain to the king what he dreamed and what it meant. Now that kind of prophecy is so amazing and remarkable, but remember

these words were spoken by ordinary men — that’s what this lesson is about. Sometimes God delivers a prophecy *to* us; and other times he delivers a prophecy *through* us.

God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. And if you will seek God and walk with God and talk with God, He will make known things to you as well.

Every morning we ought to start over. God told me to win a million souls for Him. That’s a pretty big number, you know. Someone asked me, “How many have I won? I said, “That’s not the right question. Instead, I start over new every morning. You see, if I start over new every morning, then I have a lot of people to win that day. So, I just work on them all I can and see how many I can win that day. In the same way, if you will forget the past and walk in the present every day, and if you will say I am going to do the best I can today, then the problems of the past don’t get to us. But if you are going to be defeated by the past, then you can’t do much for the present or for the future. So, what we have to do every day is make a new start with God and a new start with holiness, until we get a new spirit inside of us.

Ezekiel was a Prophet

Ezekiel was an amazing prophet. He prophesied the destiny of Russia and those other nations north of Jerusalem. He predicted their end at a time when there was no great nation north of Israel. Isn’t that amazing? Ezekiel told us about it many years ago, but it wasn’t until our own day that these prophecies could come to pass. We are living in the days Ezekiel talked about!

Malachi was a Prophet

Malachi was a prophet of God, and he said this: *The day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that*

cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteous arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

This man was the last Old Testament prophet, and he is telling you things about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, about things in our own day, and about things yet beyond us. He was just an ordinary man, but he spoke by the power, telling us things yet unborn.

Paul was a Prophet

Let me jump now from the Old Testament into what we call the New Testament. Let me begin with Paul and 2 Timothy 3:1-5. *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.*

It's very sad today that many people can't talk without cursing . . . that women can't talk without cursing . . . that writers can't write without blaspheming. And there are entertainers that get very angry because they can't curse while they are trying to entertain people. They are full of the devil, full of evil, full of sin. Their hearts are so nasty and filthy it just rolls out their mouths, and they don't know what's wrong with them.

I have found people like this . . . people with a spirit of blasphemy inside of them. Once, a man from New York City told me that he had been kicked off a dozen busses in New York City. He said he would be riding along, and suddenly blasphemy would come out of his mouth so violently that he couldn't stop. The bus driver would stop the bus and make him get off. So, he came to me, and God set him free!

Another man came to me from Chicago. As he walked downstairs in our school, he started cursing himself with the filthiest language you ever heard. That man told me before we set him free that sometimes blaspheming came on him so forcefully that he had to stick his head in a toilet and let that stuff come out of him. Don't ever let the devil get a hold of you and cause you to start cursing. You may become possessed with it, and you won't be able to stop it until God sets you free.

There are literally thousands of people living in our land today who have a spirit of blaspheming. When they curse Jesus, you can speak to them and say, "Do you know the one you are cursing? Did you ever get acquainted with him? Have you ever spoken to him?" They will become ashamed of themselves. They are blaspheming a person they know nothing about. The devil is a bad devil!

Peter was a Prophet

Peter was another great prophet of God. In 2 Peter 3:3 he said, *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.* There has never been a time when there were so many scoffers as today. They mock God; they mock the Bible; they walk after their own lusts.

Other Prophets

- John was a great prophet. He received the whole book of Revelation and wrote it down for us today.
- Agabus in Acts 11:27-28 prophesied of a famine, and it came to pass as he said.
- Then you'll also find in Acts 21:8-9 that the four daughters of Philip were prophetesses. The Bible says they were virgins, and they all prophesied.
- A number of ladies in the Bible prophesied. There is Miriam in Exodus 15. There's Debra in Judges 4, and there is Huldah in 2 Kings 22:14. There's also Anna in Luke 2:36.

I lived with a great prophet named Howard Carter. It was an amazing thing how he would say things and they would come to pass. Once, he was praying in London, and the Lord said to him, "I have a companion prepared for you. He shall come from afar. He will be a stranger when he comes, and these are the precise words he will say." Eighteen months later I met him in the United States. Without knowing what I was saying, I repeated the precise words that God had given him in London eighteen months earlier.

He had a black book that was full of prophesies. He told me that his whole life was directed by prophesy. In England he said many prophetic things, and all of them came to pass. Whenever he received a prophecy, he would write it down and show it to others. He said to me, "I don't want anyone to think that I just thought of this after it came to pass." That way, when a prophecy was fulfilled, a number of people would know that this is what he had prophesied. You know, that's good prophesy when you are willing to write it down

and hand it out and say I want you to know this is going to come to pass.

Our main thought in this lesson is to show you how ordinary women and ordinary men receive the spirit and the power of foretelling the future. But remember, it must come from God, not from your mind and not from your feelings inside of you. It must come directly from God.

Prophesy is a spiritual operation. It is for the church of Jesus Christ to grow by, to increase by, to be blessed by, to be enriched by. So, when we have prophesy, we have something that builds up the church and gives people faith.

I've seen some very strange things in my life. Once Howard Carter and I were on the backside of Tibet. We were sleeping in a hayloft above some horses, when at two o'clock in the morning three Chinese men climbed the ladder to speak with us. They said they lived a three-day journey away and that their church had an argument over a certain doctrine. God spoke to them and said, "If you will take a three-day journey directly towards the east, you will find there two men from another country, and they will tell you about this." So, the church sent three delegates. They traveled on horseback for three days, then they found Mr. Carter and me. "We don't have time for you to sleep," they said. And they woke us. Brother Carter spoke to them the truth they needed to hear. As soon as he finished, they got back on their horses and went home to tell their church what they had learned.

God is a great God. We are just entering into greater aspects of this reality. I believe we are getting close now to the full operation of the gifts of the Spirit in the church. And it's great to know that we are going to see a mightier manifestation of the supernatural than any generation has ever known. Are you ready for it?

Chapter 5

The Golden Text of Prophecy

Through prophecy the Lord allows men to know things which lie in the future. That one line gives the definition of what prophecy is all about. From the beginning of earth's time, God comprehended its ending. So, from the beginning He began to reveal to His people the future in order that they would know He was God.

God is still telling us today things regarding the future. He does this so that we may know for sure there is a living God, a great God, and a wonderful God. He does this so we may know for sure that the Bible is not just another book. He does this so we may know the future for ourselves. Isn't that amazing?!

Introduction

One of the greatest passages in the Bible is Isaiah 46:9-13. You might call it the golden key of prophecy. It says, *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea,*

I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Harken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I will bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory.

This is God declaring Himself to be the sovereign of the universe. He is not to be classified with dumb idols. Why? Because He declares the end from the beginning. It is impossible for us to tell God what to do and what not to do because he has already planned what He will do for generation after generation.

In this passage Isaiah was speaking about Israel and how they had sinned and broken their covenant with God. Consequently, the Lord told them in advance the price they would have to pay for their deliberate disobedience—they would eventually become slaves in Babylon. God can use a very sinful nation in to judge a nation that should be serving Him. That is a very strange thing. God used Babylon, a very wicked nation, to judge Israel. However, after a period of chastisement, God promised to save Israel and come near them again. And this is precisely what happened to Judah from about 605 to 537 B.C. God fulfilled His prophetic Word!

Then we read this in Isaiah 41:22-23. *Let them [the idols in which Israel was trusting] bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.*

Here, the LORD is talking about the phony gods that the people in Israel were relying on to help them. God is challenging these so-called deities to explain the past and

to forecast the future. He is urging them to speak and to do something. Of course, they couldn't do any such thing. They were just man-made carvings. They couldn't save Israel.

This is a solemn challenge to Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedism, and to all of the other "isms" in the world today. The Lord is saying to them, "If you are a real God, tell us the future! If you are a real God, do something good or evil so we might see it and be amazed!"

This is the golden key of prophecy: God knows the end from the beginning, and He is able to tell in advance what is going to happen. No other religion can do that.

The Bible doesn't just give us words. It gives us prophecy, sure words of prophecy, words that will certainly come to pass. They cannot fail because when God speaks them, He also makes them to happen.

In the book of Daniel 2:47, King Nebuchadnezzar said this to Daniel after receiving a prophetic word from God: *The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.* This is what it's all about—God tells us in advance what will happen so that after it's come to pass, we might know He is truly God.

The Gift of the Word of Wisdom Challenged The First World Empire

In Daniel 2 we read a remarkable story about King Nebuchadnezzar, the founder and emperor of the first world empire of Babylon. He had a terrifying dream that he couldn't get out of his mind. But when he demanded that his soothsayers, astrologers and sorcerers tell him the dream and then interpret it, they were helpless. They said to the king that no one could do what he requested, so he vowed to kill all of them if they couldn't fulfill his demand.

There was no man on earth who could tell King Nebuchadnezzar what he dreamed and what it meant. All of the leaders of the occult practices in Babylon couldn't tell the king anything because they had no idea what he dreamed. So, he said he would kill all of them because they were just a bunch of liars. They couldn't do what they claimed; they didn't know anything beyond their own imaginations.

Here's what the king dreamed (you can read it in Daniel 2). He saw a great image, a huge statue, which represented the total of Gentile history from the beginning to the end. The image had a head of gold, arms of silver, a belly and thigh of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay.

When Daniel heard the king's demand, he prayed, knowing that only God could tell him the king's dream and interpret it. And that's exactly what the Lord did. Daniel received a detailed description and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

When Daniel was given permission to stand before the king, he told him what he had dreamed. Then he explained that each portion of the statue represented successive Gentile nations that would come upon the earth. The golden head of the statue represented Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel told him that he and his nation were the most brilliant empire the world will ever know. The silver kingdom in the statue represented the Medes and Persians. Just as silver is less valuable and weaker than gold, so these two nations would possess a smaller degree of beauty and strength. The third empire was made from brass. This symbolized the Grecian empire. It would have more strength than the previous world powers, but it wouldn't be as rich as the other empires. After this come the legs of iron. These limbs represent the Roman empire, and the reason it has two legs is because Rome was divided into two empires—a Western empire and an Eastern empire. The ten toes, made of both iron and clay, stand for nations in

the area surrounding Israel today. The brittle clay represents nations that are governed with a form of democracy, while the iron stands for nations that are governed by some sort of strong military rule.

When the king heard Daniel repeat and explain his own dream, he was overwhelmed. He must have said, “Yes! That is exactly what I dreamed!” In Daniel 2:46, we see that the king actually bowed down to worship Daniel, as if he were a deity. Then, in Daniel 2:47-48, this is what the king said: *A truth it is that your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.*

So, all those guys who thought they were something were compelled to submit to Daniel, a man of God. Isn’t that amazing?! Daniel delivered this message more than five hundred years before Jesus was born. Yet he accurately identified the major nations that would come upon the face of the earth, one after another, until our very own day.

When Daniel foretold the rising and falling of these empires, it was the spiritual gift called “the word of wisdom” operating in his life. God made him wise as to what was going to happen politically. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are never natural; they are supernatural. When you speak by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it’s not from your mind, it’s from the mind of the Spirit of God who is telling you things that are going to come to pass. Daniel did not know these empires were coming. He didn’t know whether they would be big or little, rich or poor. He didn’t know, but the Holy Ghost knew.

So, because of Daniel’s gift, the king of Babylon learned there is *one* God, who cannot be compared to the thousands

of gods that claimed to exist in the Babylonian culture. And this God of Daniel's faith refused to be crowded out of history. He would make His presence known, even though the nation of Babylon was controlled by a raging man.

You ought to underscore that fact because our God is being pushed out of American society today. We are the same as the heathen countries today. Can you believe that in our schools today they teach yoga, homosexuality, abortion and premarital sex? They do not want a Bible to come in the front doors. And teachers are still being fired in American schools for opening a Bible in class and reading a few words out of it to their students. They will hand out condoms to crazy boys and girls, but they will not hand out a Bible to save people from hell! This is not a smart society to live in today. We send policemen up and down the halls of our schools to pick up guns and knives, but we won't teach them the Ten Commandments. Can you imagine these things are happening in our society? And you and I tolerate it.

I know what you are saying: "Well I am so insignificant." You're not insignificant if there are a thousand of you. Any man in this county can be taken out of office simply by the number of people that are present in our church . . . *if they will vote together!* That's the authority we have. All you have to do is say to the politicians, "If you don't live right, we'll replace you." You'd better do something about it, or you won't have any freedoms left at all.

Daniel became the prime minister of the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and he was still the most spiritual man living in that country. Don't let the devil tie you into knots and make you feel silly. You can be both spiritual and political at the same time. I am not ready for the devil to run over God's people. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Let's act like it!

Prophecy Determines Empires

When man rules independently of God, like our nation is trying to do today, along with most of the rest of the world, wars never cease and blood flows forever. It's wicked men who cause wars. Man must learn that the hand of Almighty God can determine the ultimate outcome of any problem. If we would seek Him, we'd know what to do and how to do it in order to have a happy world. But, sadly, we don't want to do that.

History is a long series of consequences. That's all history is. Every day you have a different situation that comes. God knows what is going to happen, and He will judge many individuals and whole nations because of the way they mishandle those events. You know, you don't have to be part of the problem. You can always do what is right, even if everyone else is doing what is wrong. Prophecy *will* be fulfilled; God *will* judge wickedness, but *you* don't have to be wicked. Are you listening?

God Describes the Last Days

Not only is the Bible up to date, it tells things that are yet to come. God is related to every event of cultural importance and spiritual significance. But if you ignore God and push Him out of your life and culture, you will come back one day to say, "Hey, I made a mistake. I made a mistake in my marriage . . . in my place of business . . . and in the way I raised my children . . . and so on." However, you won't make those mistakes if God is included in all you do or say.

You must understand that what God will do next is far more important than what the United Nations will do next. You know, the *United* Nations have never been *united* yet about any notion. So you don't need to expect it to solve the world's problems. Only the God who made the world in the first place is capable of fixing it today!

Look at Isaiah 13:13. *Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of his fierce anger.* That prophecy is yet to be fulfilled; it will come to pass during a time before Jesus' return to earth that we call "the great tribulation." You may think that because God doesn't judge you every Friday night that He's out of the judging business. But He isn't done judging, and you better realize it. What you sow is exactly what you are going to reap one day. It doesn't matter whether you like that or not, if you sow bad things, you are going to reap bad things.

Jeremiah 25:32-33 says, *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.*

If you have been wondering where the "great tribulation" will be, He just told you. It will take place from one end of the earth to the other. We are not finished with wars or famines. The Gentile age we are living in now is running out of time. When Jesus told the people in Jerusalem in A.D. 33 that their city would be trodden down by the Gentiles, they could not believe it would take place in their lifetime. They couldn't believe they would live to see it. However, it happened just as Jesus said. Therefore *this* generation has been warned as well. *We* are living in the last days.

In the book of Daniel, chapter 12 and verse one, it says this: *There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.* You ought to underline that verse. Here's a prophecy dealing with the time of the great tribulation, which could be very near. When that time comes, there will be trouble as there has never been

in the history of mankind. In a similar prophecy, in Isaiah 62:2, the Bible says that during the terrible tribulation period, *darkness shall cover the earth.*

Roads that Lead to Armageddon

Without any doubts our world is marching on the road that leads to Armageddon—earth’s final great battle. Look at the characteristics of this road.

First, it’s a road that is focused on materialism. Nobody in our world today is trying to get smarter; everyone is just trying to fill their bellies. Nobody today wants to understand why we had two world wars in our time; they are not bothered with that. Instead, all they want is more material items, more things to satisfy their flesh. Our whole total world today is in love with “things.”

Second, it is a road that is filled with sinful nations and sinful people. Most people are not interested in living right. They are not preoccupied with ways to please God, but with ways to do whatever enters their own minds. They refuse to say to God, “Thy will be done.” Instead, they demand their own will be done.

Third, it is a road that is full of immorality. Large numbers of people no longer have any respect for the human body. They treat it as if they were entitled to do anything they wanted. They kill babies in wombs, and they say it is a woman’s “right.” But they are wrong, all wrong.

Fourth, it is a road of hate and war. People do not love God, and they don’t love one another either. They worship phony gods and justify every crime they commit.

Fifth, it is a road of self-centeredness. Consequently, it cannot bring love, it cannot bring joy, and it cannot bring peace. The road we are on will not bring marriages together. It will not heal broken homes. It will not solve the world’s problems, but make them worse.

The golden key of prophecy is understanding what is going to happen in the future, and we are the very people to whom God is showing His future plans. Are you glad for that? I am. And I want to serve God and bless people until He returns! Let's do it together!

Chapter 6

The Prophetic Empires

The prophet Daniel, through supernatural power, was enabled to see the entire scope of world empires from his day to our own day. This man of God, who lived more than two thousand five hundred years ago, saw an overview of the world's greatest empires; that is, those empires that were specifically involved with Israel and Jesus Christ. The Bible doesn't deal prophetically with other significant nations, just those that are connected with Israel and Christ.

The King's Vision

When king Nebuchadnezzar went to bed one night, he had a terrifying dream. He saw a huge and powerful statue that was made from different metals and some clay. This is how Daniel described the details to the king. *Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee: and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 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 floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:21-35).

This great metallic colossus foretold the future of four world empires. The Babylonian Empire is represented by the head of gold. The Medo-Persian Empire is seen in the silver. The Grecian Empire is represented by the brass in the statue. The Roman empire is seen in the iron legs. Finally, the entire Gentile world is represented by the iron and clay of the feet.

These different metals stand for different nations . . . wicked, sinful and greedy nations. None of them are Godly nations. And all of them influenced the world in a particularly sinful manner. For example, Babylon created the occult practices that the world is swimming in today. The Medes and the Persians promoted a lascivious lifestyle that is full of drunkenness and lust. The Greeks brought an emphasis on the intellect and humanism. They were convinced men did not need God, but just the human brain. The Roman Empire is responsible for the democratic government which insists that man can rule himself; he doesn't need God as long as he can vote on this and that.

Understanding Empires

The biggest thing I want to tell you about the world's prophetic empires is how they are viewed two different ways in the Bible. In Daniel chapter 2, the leading nations of the world, from Daniel's time, until our day, are seen as metals: gold, silver, brass and iron. They appear in an impressive fashion. This is how *man* views nations. They are strong and valuable in his opinion. But there is another point of view—God's own perspective.

These same nations are described again in Daniel chapter seven. This time, instead of the nations being symbolized as valuable metals, God describes the nations according to their actual inner nature. He identifies them as wild animals!

Babylon, seen from man's perspective as a head of gold because of its wealth, is now described by God as a lion. The LORD sees things differently, you know. He sees a ravaging beast. I just want you to know that what you see in politics may look pretty nice from a superficial human perspective, but it look may altogether different once you inspect it from God's point of view.

Babylon was one of the greatest empires in history, but the nation only lasted sixty-eight years. It was so ungodly that God saw to it that this nation would not even live seventy years. Isn't that interesting? God said this nation was like a lion with the wings of an eagle. It spread its authority all over the earth. No army could stand up against her. But God plucked her wings. He stopped her in her tracks. And in a single night she fell to the Persians (who were united with the Medes).

The Medo-Persian Empire became the next world power. They never rose to the level of Babylon in terms of wealth or being structural engineers. From a human perspective, they were like silver when compared to gold. But from God's vantage point, they were just another animal, a bear with ribs in its mouth. They were a bloody nation that devoured people like food.

The third empire described by Daniel was made of brass. This represented Alexander the Great. He was so successful in conquering the world that he sat down and wept before his generals because there were no more armies he could defeat. He died of drunkenness and gluttony when he was just about thirty-three years old.

While the world could describe Greece as brass, God envisioned it as a wild leopard with four heads and with four wings on its back. The four wings and four heads stood for Alexander's four generals who replaced him when he died. They divided the world into four parts, with each one of them controlling a specific portion. Their empire lasts for 185 years, then it collapsed under its own weight of corruption.

The fourth world empire in Daniel's vision is known as the Roman Empire. We started with gold, then went to silver and to brass. This nation is seen as iron from man's point of view. It will be stronger than all of the others, and it will last longer than the rest, from 146 B.C. until the time of the Second Coming of Christ. But from God's perspective, it would be a wild beast with iron teeth. It would devour people without mercy. The two legs in the statue represent the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire.

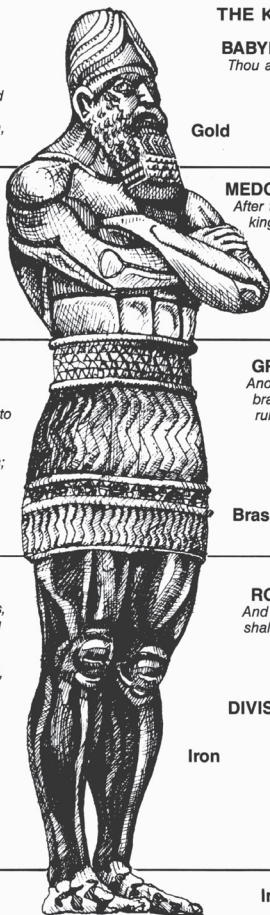
The ten toes are a continuation of the Roman Empire in a new form. It stands for the federation of nations under one head, the Antichrist. This federated empire will exist at the end of the present age. That means it is referring to our own day!

Lastly, in Daniel's vision we see a stone that is cut out from a mountain without hands. This huge stone crashes into the statue and destroys it suddenly. Then, the stone becomes a mountain that fills the whole earth. This is a prophecy of how the end-time empires will come to a dramatic defeat at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. It also explains how Jesus' Kingdom will cover the whole earth.

When the Bible says that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, it's referring to Jesus' supernatural birth to a virgin. He will come into our world (both the first time and the second time) without the help of man. His entrance will be completely unique and divine.

PANORAMA OF PROPHECY

<p>DANIEL'S VISION</p> <p>LION</p> <p>Daniel 7:4, <i>The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.</i></p>	<p>THE KING'S DREAM</p> <p>BABYLONIAN EMPIRE</p> <p><i>Thou art the head of gold.</i> (Daniel 2:38)</p> <p>Gold B.C. 538</p>	<p>68 YEARS</p>
<p>BEAR</p> <p>Daniel 7:5, <i>And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.</i></p>	<p>MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE</p> <p><i>After thee shall arise another kingdom interior to thee.</i> (Daniel 2:39)</p> <p>Silver B.C.331</p>	<p>207 YEARS</p>
<p>LEOPARD</p> <p>Daniel 7:6, <i>After this I beheld, and to another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.</i></p>	<p>GRECIAN EMPIRE</p> <p><i>Another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth.</i> (Daniel 2:39b)</p> <p>Brass B.C. 146</p>	<p>185 YEARS</p>
<p>STRANGE BEAST</p> <p>Daniel 7:8,9, <i>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 his horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.</i></p> <p><i>I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire.</i></p>	<p>ROMAN EMPIRE</p> <p><i>And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron.</i> (Daniel 2:39b)</p> <p>DIVISION OF EMPIRE A.C. 395 Constantinople</p> <p>Iron</p>	<p>AD 364 TO COMING OF CHRIST</p>
<p><i>Teeth of Iron - Rule Ten Horns - Kings Little Horn - Antichrist</i></p>	<p>Iron & Clay</p>	<p>THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES APPROX 2500 YEARS</p>
<p><i>Eastern World of Rome British Rule at Jerusalem</i></p>	<p><i>Western World of Rome American Power at Jerusalem</i></p>	
<p>TEN KINGDOMS OF ANTICHRIST</p>	<p>COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY</p>	



Interestingly, all of the world's empires were hostile to Israel. Every one of them controlled this tiny nation for a season. And none of them wanted to be controlled by God. But when Jesus returns to earth, he will destroy all secular government and establish his own rule around the world. At last, the whole planet will operate under God's sovereign control! Hallelujah!

Chapter 7

Times of the Gentiles

There has never been a more exciting time in the history of the world to teach on prophecy than today. The thing that amazes me is the fact that so few people are interested in it. I have studied prophecy more than any other doctrine because it is just so exciting. To see Bible prophecy literally fulfilled, especially in our own lifetimes, is quite interesting. Do you agree?

Definition of “The Times of the Gentiles”

In this chapter we are going to talk about the times in which we live today. The Bible calls it “the times of the Gentiles.” You say, “What does that mean?” Well, it refers to the time when Israel completely backslid and was no longer governed by God. That took place around 600 B.C. At that time the Lord transferred the political control of Israel to other nations. The word “Gentile” just means non-Jew. So, “the times of the Gentiles” refers to the time in which Israel is under the control of Gentile rulers.

Babylon came first. Then came the joint empire of Media and Persia. After that, Greece controlled tiny Israel. Finally, Rome took over. Today, we are living in the fragments of the Roman Empire. The spirit of the Roman Empire is in the

world as of this moment. This means that you are living in a strategic moment when the great world system of Gentile empires will actually be smashed and destroyed by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Daniel

In the book of Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, the prophet was given visions from God that explain the 2,600-year history known as “the times of the Gentiles.” This is the period when the Jews will be out of power. They will be forced to do whatever Gentile rulers tell them to do. And it gets worse. In Luke’s Gospel (21:24), Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews into all of the world. Jesus gave that prophecy in about A.D. 33, and it was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Romans crushed the city and drove out the majority of the Jews. They were scattered in every direction and to every place on the earth.

When I was going through the jungles of Paraguay, riding a horse, I saw nothing for hours. Then I came across a little village. I was so thirsty I didn’t know what to do. So, I pulled up to a store and looked inside. There was only about \$50.00 to \$75.00 worth of stuff on the shelves. This was in the jungle, and things were scarce. Behind the counter was a little man reading the Hebrew Bible. I couldn’t believe it. I looked at him and said, “Are you a Jew?” He said “Yes, I’m a Jew.” I asked him, “What in the name of God are you doing in this jungle?” He said, “I’m just waiting for you. What do you want to buy?” I bought a soda pop because I was so thirsty.

Here’s my point. All over the face of this earth. From the North Pole to the South Pole, the Jewish people have been scattered. That’s incredible. You don’t find Russians everywhere you go. It’s the largest nation in the world in size, but it’s people can’t be found everywhere. But you find

Jews everywhere you go. You say, “Why?” It’s because Jesus said that God would disperse them and lead them away captive, sprinkling them throughout the world. And that’s exactly what has happened. But it won’t last forever.

Jesus said the Jews would be scattered *until* the times of the Gentiles are completed. It’s likely that the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled on May 14, 1948, when Israel became a nation again, and when the Jewish nation put their headquarters back in Jerusalem. Let’s believe the words of Jesus!

During the times of the Gentiles, pagan empires ruled. Heathen empires were in control. And they came into power because God’s people were not in proper relationship with God. Listen, evil will rise up when godliness goes down. The ungodly won’t rule in a city unless the Godly refuse to rule in a city. When the godly refuse to rule, the devil rules.

Do you understand that we have a power to change the times in which we live? I have met literally hundreds of Christians in Europe who have said this to me: “Do you know why the Berlin wall came down? We prayed it down. We didn’t use any of your bullets, we prayed it down.” I like that. They believe it was their prayers that broke the forces of communism . . . the forces that denied God and denied the Bible. Their prayers crushed these evil forces. I like that! Can you say, “Amen?!”

The Smiting Stone

In Daniel 2:34, which we have already seen, it tells us that a stone that will be cut out of a mountain without hands. This is speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, of course. It is this stone that will become the ultimate smiting stone to destroy the Gentile nations. In Daniel’s vision this stone will hit the feet of the great statue, causing the entire figure to collapse.

It is amazing, that the spirit of that statue of Gentile powers is in the world right now. The spirit of all four empires is in our world, and it is destroying humanity today. But someday, when Jesus returns, this spirit will be smashed forever, and God will set up His own Kingdom on the earth!

The Roman Empire

We saw earlier that the Roman Empire in Daniel's vision was divided into two legs. This represented the Eastern and Western divisions of the Roman Empire. The Eastern Empire had its headquarters in Constantinople, and while it was separated geographically from Rome, it never considered itself to be independent from the other half of the nation. The headquarters of the Western division of the empire was located in Rome. These two divisions were mostly religious in nature. That is, they were largely controlled by the Orthodox Church in the East and the Roman Catholic Church in the West.

I don't imagine most of you ever thought about it, but the Roman Catholic Church has an ambassador in almost every nation of the world. For example, the Roman Church has an ambassador in Washington D.C., and he is equal in power to the ambassador from England or any other nation. Most people don't realize that the Pope and the Catholic Church are strongly engaged yet today in the arena of politics, but they are.

It might surprise you to learn that our ambassadors from the United States to the countries in Latin America have to present their credentials to the representative from Rome before they are accepted as ambassadors there. Now, can you see that the power of the old Roman empire is still around? I am sorry that some of us don't realize it. But that's why we're studying this subject. We are showing you the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, and we will show

you its termination as well. We want you to see how the spirit of the Gentile powers (including the Roman Empire) is still among us. We want you to know that this spirit will be absolutely crushed in the hour of Jesus' return to earth!

Conclusion

There is a great moral disintegration in the world today. What used to be sin is not sin anymore. What used to prick our conscience doesn't prick us anymore.

We have a world today that needs salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ in order to make us a good people. Without that miracle happening in our hearts we will be a devastated people. Evil cannot rise up as long as good people stand up. But it will rise up if good people sit down.

Had there been a good church in Germany, there would never have been an Adolph Hitler. They helped create him. If there had been a good righteous people in Russia, there would never have been communism. They hardly had anyone there who knew God, loved God or served God. Consequently, the devil walked right in and took over.

You and I are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. Let's behave like it. Let's keep the world from imploding on itself. Let's speak up. Let's confront and overcome sin wherever it raises its ugly head! This world can be a better place, but God's people will have to pray and get involved if it is going to happen.

Did you know that most of us who are true believers are hated because of the kind of religion we have. People think we're crazy. If you would be full of the devil like they are, you would be their buddy. But when you abstain from their sins, then you are just trash that ought to be burned. We understand and we know that in this country our government is going to come almost completely against the true Christian faith. If you are going to protect yourself, you must know

the truth, you must believe the truth, and you must have the guts to stick to the truth. This is the moment when God needs strong people, and He needs strong people because we are living in strong times!

Chapter 8

Time, Times and The Conclusion of Time

This chapter is very exciting. It's about time, times and the conclusion of time. We're going to teach you what time is, and when we're finished you have a better grasp of the meaning of time than ever before.

Time began in the Garden of Eden. Isn't that something? Time *began*. In the first verse of the Bible it says this: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. This means that God stepped out of eternity at that moment and placed Himself into what we call time. Time began with the creation of our universe.

In the Word of God we see that time is divided into periods that we call dispensations. First, there was a period of innocence—that took place before Adam fell in sin. Second, there was a period of conscience—this occurred when God permitted the human race to judge itself by means of its conscience. Then came the dispensation of human government, when God let people judge themselves through the laws they created. Next, came the period of Promise, which lasted from the days of Abraham until the days of Moses. After this came the era of Law. This lasted from the

time Moses received the Ten Commandments until the days of Jesus. With the arrival of Jesus came a new period—the dispensation of grace. These are the six dispensations (or units) of time.

The dispensation of grace that we're living in at the present time began at Calvary, when Jesus died for our sins, and it will continue through our time until the day Jesus Christ returns to earth and sets up his Kingdom. This is the longest of all the dispensations, lasting more than two thousand years. After this there will be a seventh period of time called the millennium. This is the era when Christ shall rule for a thousand years. After that, God will wrap up time and bring it to an end.

In Ecclesiastes 3:1 it says, *To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.* So we see that time has seasons and purposes. When we study prophecy, we are exploring the final seasons and purposes of God for earth and human beings.

Prophecy is Limited to Time

The first recorded prophecy had to do with the seed (or a descendant) of Eve. One of her offspring would confront Satan and bruise his head. Naturally, this is a prophecy about the Lord Jesus Christ, his crucifixion on Calvary, and his defeating of the devil. This promise was given near the beginning of time, and it was fulfilled 4,000 years later when God saw fit to send His Son to earth.

Also early in earth's history, Noah made a prophecy. He said a flood would come, cover the whole earth, and destroy both the human race and the animal kingdom. It was a hundred years later before the floods appeared, but it came to pass just as he said. I'm sure many people did not believe Noah's prediction, just as many people do not believe in prophecy today. But the thing that we're trying to show you

is that prophecy *will be* fulfilled, regardless of how long it takes to arrive.

However, time will not last forever. The Bible teaches that there will come a period when there will be no more time. At that moment, there will be no more prophecy because prophecy is an element of time. In prophecy we say that this or that will come to pass at such and such a time, but when time is gone, prophecy will also be gone. The only thing left will be eternity.

When was Time Born?

Time was born the first day of creation because at that moment God called the light *day*, and the darkness He called *night*. This combination constituted the first 24-hour day and the start of time.

Maybe we should call this period *universal time* or *human time*. It began when the universe and humans came into being. God knows nothing about time as an experience because He is eternal, beyond time. He knows nothing about aging. He is eternal life. He does not grow old, as does everything that exists in the arena of time. Instead, God created time for humans. He did not create it for angels. Angels are not limited to time. Heaven has no time periods. Time is an earth thing, and it started when the earth started.

What is Time?

Time has to do with activity. Galatians 4:10 says, *Ye observe days, months, times and years*. You see, we measure time by how long it takes us to do something: days, months and years. So, time is related to what we do. All of our lives and activity are inseparably linked to measurements of time. It takes us so many days to plant a garden, or to plant a field on a farm, or to repair something. We measure everything by the instrument called time.

Man's clock and man's calendar can be described actually as a state of mind. Now, you have to get into that concept pretty closely if you want to have an understanding of what we're dealing with in time. We're dealing with it here because we want to show you that prophecy is linked with time, and when times ceases, prophecy will also cease. When time, as we understand it, ceases, there will be no more clocks or calendars. So, time can be described as a temporary state of mind.

Then there is solar time. We measure the movement of the earth by time. When it makes one rotation, we call it 24-hours. When it makes one revolution around the sun, we call it a year. And so it goes, from planet to planet as well. Do you see how time is a measurement of movement?

Time is an arrangement of things, it is a series of events which we remember. For example, I remember when I was fifty years old. I can also remember events before I was fifty and after I was fifty. All of these events are individual links in the chain we call time. We remember things like weekly schedules, birthdays, holidays, accidents and deaths by their appearance in time.

God is the ultimate Time Keeper. No one knows, but God knows when man's time will run out. You cannot measure the fullness of your own time because you don't know when your time will come to an end. Some people die early, and other people die later. No one knows how long he or she will live because God is the One who is in charge of time. He is the Time Keeper of my life, of your life, and of the whole world.

God Wants People to Understand Time

In Luke 19:44 Jesus said, *And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; that they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the*

time of thy visitation. Who's he talking to? He was talking to the people of Israel, particularly those living in Jerusalem. He was talking to people who should have understood their time, but they didn't. Jesus explained to them that their time was running out, but they didn't recognize what time it was from God's perspective.

If you were a historian, and if you examined our nation's history closely, I think you would see that America's time is running out. You would see it by evidences of crime. You would know it by the breaking up of the home. You would know it by the strife that exists between labor and management. You would know it by looking at the trends in our stock market. If you would look at all of these kinds of things, you would be able to see that time is running out for our country. We've had many good things happen in our nation, but bad things are happening now, and our time is coming to a close.

When Jesus spoke to Jerusalem and to Israel, he was essentially saying to them, "I feel so sorry for you and for your children because judgment is coming; there will not be one stone left on top of another in any of your structures." This prophecy was literally fulfilled just forty years later. And why did all of this happen? Because they didn't understand the times, especially the time of the visitation of the Messiah in their midst. They prayed for years for the Messiah to come. But when he came and stood in front of them, they didn't understand God's timing. They didn't grasp God's clock. They were running on a different time, and they missed God altogether.

I'd like to address you personally. You may think opportunities are going to come to you every day, but they will not come every day. You must be ready in each moment to hear God and to follow Him. If you don't, you'll miss God's timing.

One day, a man walked into the parsonage that we lived in on Michigan Street. He said, "I want to sell you a piece of property on Ireland Road." I didn't want it. I didn't need it. I had a nice home, and it was free of charge, so I said to him that I didn't want that place. Well, eventually he maneuvered me into buying this property. He sold it to us for forty three thousand dollars, and it's worth a million dollars now! If I had not done it at that time (even reluctantly), that time would have never occurred again. You couldn't find a more beautiful place to worship God than here. Isn't that wonderful? It's prime property. I didn't know what God wanted it for. I didn't want it personally, so I gave it to the church after we paid on it for fifteen years. It was a free gift, but if I hadn't purchased it at that time, they would have sold it to somebody else and I would have missed God's timing. So, when a unique time comes into your life, don't think it will always be there. Time is on the run. Catch it every time you get the opportunity.

There are millions of people in hell today. God never wanted them to go there. The Bible says that God does not want anyone to perish. He's not happy about people being hurt. He's not happy about people going to hell. He is a good God, but when He presents something to us, most of us miss it. And more than likely, we've missed it forever, especially if we die without Christ in our lives. They might play a pretty song at our funeral, but that won't change anything. When we die, everything is settled. Time is finished for us. There is no more of it left to do anything. Isn't that something? Are you ready, really ready?

Matthew 16:3 says, *In the morning [you say], it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?* Isn't that something? Because of that natural phenomenon in the sky in the morning the

Jews knew if it was going to be good weather or bad weather that day, but they were not able to understand the greater signs of the times. The long-awaited Messiah was there in front of them, and they missed it. They had the opportunity of a lifetime, but they couldn't see it.

The same thing is happening today. Very few people really understand the times in which they are living. In our entire nation there may not be even one percent of the people who grasps the times that we're in, and that includes Christians. God wants us to understand the times in which we live, but not very many people do. That's why I'm giving you these lessons, so you can understand the times.

In Revelation 10:6 it says, *And [the angels] swear by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.* Look at what God decreed. He created time, but someday He will see to it that it doesn't exist any longer. He will remove it.

You don't know when your time will come to an end, and I don't know the end of my time. Only God knows the conclusion of our times, so we ought to make the most of the time we have. Every day of my life I ask the Lord if I am doing what I should do. I want to know if I am using my time correctly. If you don't check it out with God you might become like one of those people two thousand years ago who didn't understand the times in which they lived.

The Lord spoke to me in Jerusalem and he said, "My people sing about my coming, and they preach about my coming, but they live as though I am never coming back." That means they don't have an understanding of the times. Pray for it. Study it. Get it. And your life will be altered forever.

There are more than a few people in hell who wish they understood the times in which they lived. They should have asked God to explain time to them, but they didn't ask. Now they are in hell with no hope to escape. But that could all have been avoided, if they would have examined the subject of time while they were here.

Be sure that doesn't happen to you. Know the times and be prepared to meet God when your time is over!

Chapter 9

The Doomsday Clock

It is so exciting to deal with mystery. I think all of us feel that mystery is an interesting thing. And when you deal with prophecy, you are dealing with the most unique and important mystery of all.

The Prophecy of Peter

In 2 Peter 3: 8 it says, *Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* Some teachers feel that this is discussing the six days in which God created the heavens and the earth. In other words, he is speaking of those periods, like Monday and Tuesday (or 2,000 years), which would take you up to the time of Noah's flood. Then, Wednesday and Thursday, another 2,000 years, would take you to the time Jesus died on the Cross.

It seems that every 2,000 years something very dramatic happens on the earth. At the conclusion of the first two thousand years, the flood came. And at the end of the second pair of thousand years, Jesus died on the cross to save the world. Now, we are coming to the last pair of two thousand years: this will occur when Jesus Christ returns to earth and sets up the Millennial Kingdom.

Peter tells us not to be ignorant of these things, but of course many people are still ignorant. They don't understand the times in which we live.

Then Peter says this in verse nine: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* You could change the word "promise" to "prophecy." God is not slack concerning his prophecies. He is aware of all of them, and in their proper time they will all come to pass.

When Peter states that God is longsuffering and that He does not desire for anyone to perish, I find this passage to be one of the greatest verses in the Bible. If you ever think that God wants you to die and go to hell, you had better change your thinking. That is not true. Every person in hell will be there solely because he rebelled against the divine revelation that God put within him. There is no other way to go to hell. You don't go there by accident; you go there by the decisions you make right now.

You say, "Well, how about the heathen that never heard the Gospel?" Listen, within every person on the face of this earth God has put a conscience, and that conscience says, "thou shalt not kill," "thou shalt not steal," "thou shalt not commit adultery," and so on. God has put all of these values inside of a man. I've talked with people all over the world, including the most primitive people on the planet. And I have never found a single person who didn't instinctively know it was wrong to kill, wrong to steal and wrong to commit adultery. Everyone knows this because God placed it inside their conscience.

The only people in hell will be those who resisted what God put in their conscience. When people say, "I will not obey God; I will live as I please," then they will have to go where God pleases. You cannot go to a place of holiness if

you are not holy. You cannot go to a place of peace if you're full of rebellion.

Next, in 2 Peter 3:10 it says, *The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* The phrase, "the day of the Lord," refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. Peter states that this day shall come as a thief in the night. When does a thief come? When we do not expect him, when we forget to lock the garage door. We are so caught up in the things of this world that very few of us are ready for the Lord's return. His coming will be a shock to the majority of us. Why, even if he came back at Christmas, no one would be expecting him because we're looking for Santa Claus. Isn't that something? We need to get ourselves ready.

Peter continues to inform us that the "heavens shall pass away . . . the earth also and the works that are therein." Our heavens are so polluted that many scientists believe we will destroy ourselves through our misuse of the environment. The word "works" in this passage refers to cities, buildings, dams, and everything else that man has made. According to this prophecy, everything that man has ever done will go up in flames. There is nothing permanent in our environment or on the face of this earth; it will all be destroyed someday.

In the very next verse, Peter says, *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.* "Seeing." That is why you are studying prophecy, so you can "see." The people in the world won't see it, of course. They won't know anything about the end times. They will have missed it.

Prophecy teaches us that all these things on the earth shall be dissolved. The real estate that you have clung to so

strong will be dissolved. Your treasury notes, the ones that you've hung on to for so long, those little scraps of paper that you have trusted in for your old age, will all be dissolved. The whole thing will be burned. That is what dissolved means—it will become as nothing. It will be gone.

Therefore, what sort of person ought you to be in the light of such prophecies? That sentence is so powerful. If you understand these things about the future, what kind of person are you to be? In other words, are we going to live like sinners? Or, are we going to live like men and women of God who understand the times?

Verse twelve of 2 Peter 3 says, *Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* This is exactly what happens when an atomic bomb explodes. There is fire, fervent heat and melting. In this connection, Jesus said this in Matthew 24:21, *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor never shall be.*

In that day, the accumulation of all crime, the accumulation of all murder, the accumulation of all adultery, and the accumulation of every other sin will be piled high on the earth. Then there will a judgement from God such as the world has never experienced. It is going to be so great that unless God shortens the days of His judgments no one will be left alive! That's what prophecy teaches us, and we had better warn people before it comes to pass.

The World's Strangest Clock

In 1947, a group of American scientists founded the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, a magazine designed to inform physicists and chemists regarding the latest atomic data. I've gone to the library and looked at these magazines a number of times. What they put out is not very beautiful

or colorful, and the only thing they do is tell you how close the human race is to its doomsday, according to certain scientists. It was in June of 1947, when the cover of this magazine displayed a large clock. It is now referred to as “the Doomsday Clock.” The hour hand was placed at midnight, and the minute hand was placed at eight minutes before midnight.

By October 1949, when Russia exploded the atomic bomb, the minute hand was moved to four minutes before midnight. Each month when the magazine was printed, the scientists adjusted the hands on the clock forward or backward, depending on the tensions that existed in the world at that time. In March of 1959, when the hydrogen bomb was developed, the clock said three minutes to twelve. In 1966, the world conditions grew quieter, and the minute-hand on the clock was placed at twelve minutes to midnight. In November of 1969, it was moved to 10 minutes to twelve. In September of 1974, the hands were at nine minutes to twelve. And so on, every month.

Actually, no one really knows what time it is. Many scientists are convinced we will manage to destroy ourselves, but only God can bring the clock to its end. Only He knows when our world, as it exists today, will end.

The Bible Is the Real Doomsday Clock

If you follow the Bible, then you have the real doomsday clock to work with. God warned Noah that there would be a flood. His clock ticked down to the zero hour, and then the rains came (Genesis 7:4-10). But no one paid any attention to Noah. He preached to the people, he warned them, but they wouldn’t listen. And most people aren’t listening today either.

In Sodom the clock ran to midnight real fast. There was only one night to get ready and escape judgment (Genesis

19:12-17, 24-29). God spoke to Abraham in the afternoon, after eating dinner with him. He said the sins of Sodom had grown and grown until they came all of the way up to Him, so He came down from heaven in order to destroy the wicked city. Abraham began to plead for the city because his nephew lived there. He asked the LORD to spare the city if there were just ten righteous people living there. The LORD agreed, but there weren't even ten good people in that whole town. So God destroyed it completely. The clock struck midnight and judgment fell.

In Egypt, Moses wound the clock again. He warned the Pharaoh and his officials, but they refused to listen to God's message. It only took a few days for the clock to run out, then it struck midnight with nationwide devastation (Exodus 12:41).

In Nineveh, God counted to forty. They had a doomsday clock that was only forty days long. But, amazingly, the people repented, and God reset the clock. They were spared. They were also warned. For more than a century God withheld judgment from them, then after 150 years, when it was apparent that they would no longer live morally, God did another countdown. They refused to repent, and He judged them for their gross and chronic sins.

God also kept time in Babylon. For a while they listened to Him, but eventually they went their own way. Their doomsday clock ran out when God's finger wrote on the wall and said, "You are weighed in the balances and you are found wanting" (Daniel 5:30). That night the whole empire met its doom. Think of it. In one night the thousand most influential people in the country got drunk and then were killed by an invading army. In an instant the Medes and the Persians took over the empire. The time for the Babylonians ran out in a hurry.

At the battle of Armageddon there will be a midnight hour for the whole earth (Revelation 16:16). For three-and-a-half years God will send one judgment after another throughout the world. There will be horrific plagues, sores that you will not be able to be healed of, pain that you will not be able to release yourself from, undrinkable water everywhere, wars, famines, earthquakes, and more. The great prophetic clock, the great doomsday clock, will tick until the minute Jesus returns to earth to fight in the battle of all battles—Armageddon.

In the awful time of the great tribulation, just prior to the Second Coming of Christ, the saints of God will not be there. They will be raptured before all of these miseries occur. Only sinners will go through the terrible period of tribulation.

When hail is the size of your fist, it will tear an automobile to pieces in the street. It will knock windows out of buildings. It will even paralyze a city. But the Bible says that the hail during the tribulation period will weigh 100 pounds (Revelation 16:3-4)! If God has put this in his “Doomsday Bulletin,” then we should look at it, we should read it, and we should arrange our lives according to it. I am speaking to you, and I am speaking to America. We must accept the *whole* Word of God.

I don’t want to be a sinner, and I don’t want live under the dread of sin. Neither do I want to live under the judgement of sin. I want to live for God. I want to let Jesus take my judgement away. How about you?

God’s Doomsday Clock is about to strike midnight. We are living in the final countdown for the nations of the world. You and I should teach others, you and I should pray for others, you and I should warn others. Can you say, “Amen?”

This is what prophecy is all about. God *foretells* it, God *fulfills* it. Until that hour, let's get ready for it. And all the people said, "Let's get ready for it!" I am glad that we can learn these things, and I am glad that we can understand them. Now, let's live the way that God wants us to live.

Chapter 10

Dead Nations Reborn

One of the most amazing, one of the most remarkable, one of the most glorious signs of the times is the rebirth of dead nations. This resurgence of ancient people and places is the fulfillment of key prophecies. It proves the absolute veracity of the Bible!

No historic period ever knew the rebirth of dead nations like the one you're living in today. You are living in the greatest prophetic period our earth has ever known. You won't get this information out of the daily paper or out of the shows on television, but you can get it from the Word of God! And we're going to give you the Word of God that teaches you about these nations coming back to life after long periods of non-existence.

Over twenty times in the book of Ezekiel the Lord says, "that you might know that I am God." In other words, God was doing things in Ezekiel's time to prove to the people that He was real. God has a hard time proving who He is. Even here, in South Bend, Indiana, over 90% of the people don't know who He is. One day this whole world is going to know who He is, and they are going to be very sorry they didn't have enough sense or take enough time to understand His Word.

About one-third of the Bible is made up of prophecy. Here are details upon details about the future. No other book in any other religion has ever spent so much of its contents on things yet to happen — that's putting your neck on the line; that's God saying "I'm going to prove to you that I know the future because I want you to know Me and to trust Me."

Prophecy — fulfilled prophecy — proves the Bible is God's Book. It proves God is real. Aren't you glad you know God and His Word?! Every time I look inside the Bible I say, "Oh, thank God I'm not what I used to be, and I'm not what I'm going to be. God and His amazing Word will change me today."

The Rebirth of Israel

In Luke 21:29-31 it says, "And he [Jesus] spoke to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

In the Bible, trees represent the Gentile nations, while the fig tree stands for the nation of Israel. The Kingdom of God speaks about the millennium reign of the Lord Jesus when he shall rule the whole earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords from his throne in Jerusalem.

Joel 1:6 says, "For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion [this refers to the nation of Babylon]. He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white [this refers to Babylon's attack of Israel]." So we see here that Israel is again identified as a fig tree.

In the book of Ezekiel we read a tremendous prophecy about a time when the nation of Israel will be restored. “And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel . . . and I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt . . . Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant . . . And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.”

In Luke’s Gospel Jesus said that the nations would grow into power, along with Israel, just prior to the return of Jesus Christ and God’s Kingdom on the earth. Then, in Joel it says that the nation of Israel will be devastated. But in Ezekiel we read that the nation of Israel will be restored. All of this has to do with the death and resurrection of nations, which is a sovereign work of God.

The Rebirth of Egypt

At times, Egypt had a brilliant history of leadership. It was one of the leading nations of the world. Its Pharaohs, pyramids and riches were remarkable. She ruled North Africa from early times, and they even invaded and conquered the Holy Land several times throughout her history. Then, Egypt lost its prominence. For all practical purposes, she laid virtually dead in the desert. Her glory and influence were gone.

- The Phoenicians came and built Carthage, but in 842 B.C. they were defeated.
- The Assyrian armies controlled Egypt until the Greeks came and took over the nation.
- In 146 B.C. the Roman armies conquered Egypt.
- Next came the Vandals in A.D. 429. They ruled for 100 years.
- The Byzantines took over the nation, and for about a century there was peace.
- The Arab conquests of Egypt came in A.D. 641. During the 600's and 700's they brought the Arabic language and the Muslim religion to Egypt.
- The Europeans came in the 1400's. First, Portugal ruled Egypt. Later, Great Britain ruled the nation until she gained her independence in 1912.

It's interesting to notice that Egypt is spoken of prophetically in the Bible. In spite of its dismal disappearance from history as an independent nation, its rebirth is predicted to come to pass in the last days. If you were to look up the word "Egypt" in your concordance you would see that this nation still has a future (an example is located in Isaiah 19:24). Some Christians today are convinced that the Muslim religion will fall on its face in the last days. They believe that millions of people in the so-called Muslim nations will be converted and become mighty instruments of God!

The Rebirth of Turkey

Then you have a great land called Turkey. This nation has had a total rebirth. Turkey ruled the Near East, including Israel, for four centuries as the Ottoman Empire. Then it joined with Germany in World War I, and that's where they lost everything. When Germany fell, she fell with her. But today, Turkey is resurging with a strong voice and serving as a kind of a bumper zone between Israel and Russia. More importantly, people are beginning to come to Christ in this Muslim nation.

The Rebirth of Syria

Then we have the rebirth of Syria. This nation's capital, Damascus, is one of the oldest cities of antiquity. Hundreds of wars have been fought in that land for hundreds of years. While Syria had no significance for centuries, she has now suddenly become an important nation in the world. After World War I, the nation was controlled by France. Today she is closely allied with Russia — that's where she gets her weapons for the cause of terrorism and the destruction of Israel. Once this nation was dead, but now it is alive and causing havoc throughout the region.

The Rebirth of Lebanon

Then you have the rebirth of Lebanon. One thousand years ago the Maronite Christians of Lebanon welcomed the Crusaders who came from Europe. Traditionally, France has been their friend from the time of the Crusaders. The Ottoman Turks conquered Lebanon in 1515 and made it part of the Ottoman Empire for the next 400 years. When Turkey and Lebanon were both defeated in World War I, the League of Nations put Lebanon under the French rule. Later, in 1943, Lebanon was granted independence. Again, we see a "dead" nation is resurrected to life.

The Rebirth of the Continent of Africa

This may be one of the greatest rebirths in our time. What we're trying to say is that numerous nations (Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and others) that lost their national identity for centuries have somewhat suddenly, in the last days, been reborn. God wants us to know that the birth of these nations just didn't happen. They are the result of the fulfillment of end-times prophecy. It's not a coincidence that they exist in our own day. For instance, various parts of Africa have been ruled by Great Britain, France, Portugal, Spain and Holland. From 1900 to 1945, most of Africa was under foreign rule. However, in our time it has awakened to a new political reality.

If you go to Africa very often you will discover that there are very powerful forces surging in that continent that could change the world. One of these forces is spiritual. Millions of Africans are receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They shout, they praise the Lord, they dance in the Spirit, and they worship the Lord in a very strong way. On the other hand, there are strong Marxist (communist) and Muslim influences there as well. Africa needs a tremendous amount of help, and we're glad to help them however we can.

The Rebirth of China

For a long time China was called "the sleeping giant." Some people said, "God help the world if they ever wake up, because they have more than one billion people who are loyal to only one flag." It's almost unbelievable that you could have over one billion humans living under one government, but that is the case in China today.

For many hundreds of years China was closed to foreigners. The emperors wanted to keep them separate from foreigners, so they did not permit their own people to go *out* of their nation, and they did not allow strangers to come *in*

either. It has only been recently that they have permitted people more freedom to come and go here and there.

China is now suddenly awakening. Under its own dominance China has become a world power and is in a race with Russia to see how many of the African nations she can influence and control. Now maybe you didn't realize that, but China gives money to the Africans, and there are a number of African states that are tightly aligned with China. We don't know what's going to happen to China except that she will be present when the Lord dries up the Euphrates River and that her armies will march directly to the Holy Land to fight in the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16 with 9:13-16).

Many wonderful things are taking place today in the rebirth of China. Literally millions of the Chinese people have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ in their underground churches. It is very remarkable that when the missionaries were there, the work went so slowly, but when the communists took charge and removed the missionaries, the Christian faith took hold. In a similar way, in Russia the underground church has flourished. While the communists chased after them and made many of them martyrs, they increased like the children of Israel in Egypt.

The Rebirth of India

Then you have the rebirth of India. India is seeking to have as many people as China, in spite of the fact that their territory is so much smaller. Today, there are just over one billion people in this nation, making it the second most populated nation on earth (just behind China).

India is a land that has been closed to the gospel for centuries. I wish you would read my book, "What Was God Doing When the Pagan Religions were Born?" When Buddha was born, the prophet Isaiah was preaching. God

was not silent. His voice was in the world. The reason we have pagan religions today is because of rebellion — they intentionally rebelled against the Ten Commandments that were written upon their hearts from the instant of their creation. I challenge you to read Romans 1. Here is the story of the origin of all paganism. Back to India, after the ascension of Jesus to heaven, the twelve apostles went everywhere preaching the Good News of salvation. Thomas went to India, but they cut him to pieces. I've been to his grave in Madras, but the seed of the blood continued and now India has a few million people who are Christians.

The Rebirth of Iraq and Iran

Iraq is ancient Babylon. Who in the name of God, in the last hundred years, would believe that out of that dry desert there would emerge a nation to challenge America? It's beyond comprehension that out of the ashes of the old Babylon Empire there would arise a man who would challenge not just America, but the whole United Nations! Amazingly, Babylon has been resurrected in our time. Additionally, you have Iran, which is ancient Persia. This is another national resurrection.

None of these “dead” nations have been reborn by accident. The Lord is resurrecting them, and this indicates that Jesus' return to earth is going to be soon. We want you to see that the days in which you are living are prophetic. The Kingdom of God is about to come from heaven and change our world! Can you say, “Hallelujah!”?

Chapter 11

God's Prophecy to Abraham

The descendants of Abraham through Isaac make up about one percent of the world's population, yet they are a race of destiny and a race of prophecy. They have been called outcasts by many nations of history, and they have carried this designation for many centuries. They have been no-lands children — for many years there was no place they could call home. And they have been the world's untouchables, as if they had a deadly disease. They have been pushed out of whole nations and hated by all nations. It all began in the book called Genesis, which is the first book of the Bible.

Genesis 12:1 says, “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from your father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee.’” You may not realize it, but the total number of people He was speaking of here could come to a few hundred relatives. The LORD is telling him to walk away from all of his natural relationships, all of his family. Sometimes when we get moving with God we have requests from Him and demands from Him that go beyond our natural ability to understand, but if we will follow His words we will discover down the

road that God knew what He was doing. God's ways are always better than our own ways.

In Genesis 12:2, the LORD said to Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great: and thou shalt be a blessing." This is an amazing prophecy. God speaks to a single man and He tells him that his descendants will become an entire nation! Today the flag of David flies over the nation of Israel! This prophecy was given 4,000 years ago, and it is being fulfilled to the letter.

God promised to make Abraham's name great, and He has done just that. All of the Jews of the world call Abraham their father. All of the Muslims in the world, about one billion of them, called Abraham their father as well. This is one of the greatest names of all time. Think about it. Here was a nobody that nobody had ever heard of living in Ur of the Chaldees (which is located in what will become the land of Babylon and Iraq), and God said to him that He would make his name great. Well, He has done just that.

The Lord also said to Abram that he would be a blessing to the world. You could write a whole book on how the descendants of Abraham have blessed humanity. First and foremost through Abraham's family came the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind. Second, the Jews produced the greatest book ever written — the Bible. Regardless of what a person may think about the Holy Bible, the fact is that it has outsold all other books that have ever been produced. So you can see that God has kept His prophetic word to Abraham.

In Genesis 12:3 the Bible says, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." I found out a long time ago that if you don't like a person you don't have to hate him. Just move on. Don't be mean to him, especially if he is one of God's children. We are to bless God's people, not

curse them. If we will bless them, God will bless us. But if we curse God's people, then God will curse us. This passage is talking about blessing and cursing the Jews, but it can be applied to all of God's people. Bless them; don't curse them. Why? Because you will reap whatever you sow!

Genesis 12:4 says, "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." Here's our problem: God speaks to us and we just sit, we don't budge. But Abraham was different. He got up and departed his country. He didn't just listen to God, he acted on what God told him, he responded to God's revelation to him.

Then, the Bible says this in Genesis 12:5. "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed out of Haran. He took with him his wife, Sarai, and Lot (his brother's son; he took him along because he was an orphan and had no mother or father). Finally, they arrived in Canaan. I hate to be in transition all the time. I like to arrive. Leaving a place is important, but arriving is more important. Abraham didn't get half-way to his destination — he arrived. A lot of people never arrive at the place God wants them to be because they quit before they get there. Abraham didn't quit!

The story goes on: "And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem [which is up in Samaria, the place where Isaac dug a great well that later came to be called Jacob's well], unto the plain of Moreh [which is down in Hebron, about twenty miles just south of Jerusalem]. And the Canaanites were then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land:

and there buildeth he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him” (Genesis 12:6-7).

Here we have the story of the beginning of the time when Abraham entered the land we call “Israel.” A little later in the story we learn that Abraham had children who eventually populated major sections of this region in the world. All the troubles of the modern Near East today are conflicts between Abraham’s children! It’s awful when your children fight each other, isn’t it?

God appeared to Abraham at least ten times. First, He came to Abraham when he lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. Next, He came to him again at Haran. Then, at least eight more times God appeared to Abraham in the land of Canaan. It was here that God promised to give this land to his descendants — to Israel. From that moment in history, Israel became the nerve center of the globe. There is no place on earth so bloodstained as the land of Israel. Here is the place where the greatest political controversies and religious upheavals would appear.

In the next chapter we will take a closer look at the amazing history of the Promised Land. We will see how all the nations of the world have hated Israel. We will also see how God intends to restore her as a sign for the timing of Jesus’ near return!

Chapter 12

Jerusalem: The World's Most Prophetic City

Jerusalem is the world's most prophetic city. No city on the face of this earth has had so much written for it and against it as this city. It is the key to the controversy that is in the world at this very moment.

Abraham Meets Melchizedek here. At Jerusalem, some 4,000 years ago, a gentleman named Abraham came to observe the city. It had the most unusual king the world has ever known. His name was Melchizedek. We do not know who founded Jerusalem, unless it was Melchizedek. This unusual ruler did not have a navel; he was not born of a woman (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6-11; 6:20-7:28). He was a Divinely created administrator of Jerusalem, and he functioned in two capacities, just like Jesus is going to function when he rules Jerusalem in the future. Melchizedek was both the political ruler of the city and its spiritual overseer (Genesis 14:18). Jesus will be both the King and High Priest of Jerusalem as well.

There is no other place that I love going to as much as Jerusalem. I stand and just look at it! The Israelis have now dug deep and found the very stones that Isaiah would have walked

on about forty feet below the present surface of Jerusalem. This is the same place that Jesus would have walked — the same stones are still there! So there is an enchantment about this city that causes you to want to see it again and again.

Abraham Offers Isaac Here. A few years later, Abraham went back to Jerusalem. God told Abraham to go back to that city, to Mount Moriah (which is located in the heart of the city). There he was to offer his son as a sacrifice. At that time Abraham lived in Beersheba. Why would he have to go one hundred miles on a camel or a donkey in order to pray and to build an altar at that specific site? (Sometime our generation is going to learn that there are very particular blessings in very particular places. They don't seem to have caught that yet; they think the whole world is just a place that has to do with human nature. That is not true.) God would not permit this offering to take place anywhere else because this event was a prophetic symbol (or foreshadowing) of the death of His own son — Jesus was crucified within 300 feet of Abraham's sacrifice! The whole thing had to be completed perfectly for God to be satisfied with it. So Abraham went back to the city of Jerusalem, not as a guest of the king at that time, but to build an altar that would depict the death of God's own Son 2,000 years later!

David Ruled Here. It was at this city that King David reigned. Initially, David served at Hebron, but the people said to him, "Why don't you come home?" So the Jews chased out the Jebusites that had come in and taken over the area. Afterward, Jerusalem became the capital city of the nation of Israel. As far as many modern Jews are concerned, there is no other capital on the face of this earth. Although Jerusalem has been assaulted by foreign enemies at least forty times since the days of David, and though the captors have changed the name a few times, from the Israeli point of view, there is only one capital, and its name is Jerusalem.

The Temple was Built Here. It was at Jerusalem where David's son, Solomon, built the Temple for worship. This structure possessed so much gold and so many precious stones that its value could not be calculated. This made the city even more highly esteemed by the Jewish people.

Jesus was Crucified Here. Just outside the city walls of Jerusalem the Son of God was crucified — at Golgotha, the place of the skull. The tomb where Jesus was buried was part of the hill of sacrifice. Joseph of Aramathea had dug into the bowels of that limestone mountain and prepared a tomb there. In front of the tomb he put a little garden. This is all part of Golgotha, not separate from it, but a part of it. Jesus not only died at Golgotha, he was buried and rose again at Golgotha. So when he walked out of the tomb, just a few feet away, there was the place of his crucifixion. The Jewish leaders condemned him there. The Roman soldiers killed him there. But just hours later he rose from the dead there as well!

It seems to me that we should be taught from a baby that by the time we are ten we should go to Jerusalem. Then, by the time we are twenty we should go back and study it very carefully. Did you know that a lot more Europeans go to Israel than Americans do? It is not because we are poorer than they are. It is because we are so superficial that we do not see the spiritual strength, the spiritual power and the spiritual direction that one can receive if he had a closer relationship with Jerusalem.

The Church was Born Here. Just two or three hundred yards away from Golgotha, in the Temple, the Christian Church was born. On the very first day three thousand people were born again and filled with the Holy Ghost. From there, they went the four ways of the compass out of that city to witness for Jesus Christ. In a few weeks in their "newspapers" they were saying that these believers had

turned the world upside down. They were world changers, and that is exactly what God would like all of us to be in these last days!

The Name of the City: Jerusalem

Jerusalem means “City of Peace.” The word “Salem” means “peace,” and “Jeru” likely means “foundation or city.” So it is called the *City of Peace*. It is both the ancient and the present capital of Israel.

When God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 22 to go to the land of Moriah, He was directing him to the immortal city of Jerusalem. This community was built on two hills at that time, and there are hills all the way around it. In the East there were three hills called the Southeast, Center East and Northeast Hills. In the West there were two hills called the Southwest and the Northwest Hills.

On the Southeast Hill stood Melchizedek’s city. On the Central East Hill Isaac was offered. Two millennia later Jesus was crucified and resurrected there. Without any doubt, this is the most exciting city on the face of the whole earth!

The History of Jerusalem before Christ

Jerusalem has a long history, and the only thing we will do here is highlight some of the things that happened there before the time of Jesus Christ.

1. Around 1900 BC, the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek, was priest and king of Salem when he met Abraham (Genesis 14).
2. From approximately 1900-1800 BC, Egypt came and ruled the city. It is presumed that after Abraham’s time Melchizedek no longer reigned in the city.

3. About 1300 BC, it was a Jebusite Fortress. These were fierce people who managed to control the city even after Joshua entered the Promised Land.
4. In 1010 BC, David chased out the Jebusites and made Jerusalem his capital (2 Samuel 5:7). The southern portion was called “Zion” or “David’s City.” Later, the term “Zion” referred to all of Jerusalem. This city was controlled by David and his successors for four hundred years. Solomon’s magnificent Temple was built here in 950 BC (I Kings 6:1).
5. In 587 BC, the armies of Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed the city and carried away the majority of the people to his country (2 Kings 25).
6. In 536 BC, the Persians were in charge of Jerusalem. Cyrus conquered Babylon and permitted the Jews to return home. Nehemiah in 444 BC rebuilt Jerusalem at Persia’s expense.
7. In 331 BC, the Greeks came and took control of Jerusalem after Alexander the Great defeated Darius II at the battle of Arbela near Nineveh.
8. In 300 BC, Jerusalem fell to Egypt. After the death of Alexander, his general, Ptolemy (founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt), defeated Jerusalem.
9. In 198 BC, Syria took over the land of Jerusalem. Antiochus III, the Seleucid king (and descendent of Seleucus Nicator, another of Alexander’s generals), took control of the Promised Land and Jerusalem.

10. In 142 BC, the Jews temporarily came into control of their land. When Antiochus IV entered Jerusalem, plundered the people and desecrated the Temple, the Maccabees rose in revolt. The Temple was eventually rededicated and independence from Syria was gained in that year.
11. In 63 BC, Rome dominated the city. What you have to see at this point is that all four of the world empires controlled Jerusalem: Babylon, Persia, Greece (both directly and through Alexander's four generals) and Rome.
12. In 40 BC, a Parthian army plundered Jerusalem.
13. Finally, in 37 BC, Rome regained control of Jerusalem and the Promised Land. Herod the Great was granted permission from Rome to oversee this territory. While he was a ruthless dictator, he oversaw numerous building projects, including the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The History of Jerusalem Since the Time of Christ

Troubles in Jerusalem continued after the coming of Jesus Christ. Here is a brief overview of her difficult history.

1. In the year 33, Jesus was crucified there. Tiberius was emperor in Rome, Pilate was procurator in Judea, and Caiaphas was High Priest in Jerusalem. Those are the dominate figures being moved around on a chess board at that moment in history.
2. In 70, the Roman General Titus took his armies and surrounded Jerusalem. In May, half of the city was

captured. In July, the Fortress of Antonia fell, and the daily sacrifices ceased. In August, the Temple went up in flames. And on September 4th, the city fell after a 143-day siege. By some estimates (probably highly exaggerated), as many as 600,000 people perished in the conflict.

3. In 132, after another Jewish revolt, Emperor Hadrian burned the city to the ground. A much smaller city was built in its place and named “Jupiter.” All Jews were excluded from this city.
4. In 312, the Roman General, and eventually the Roman Emperor, Constantine, allowed the Jews to come back into the city. From that time until today the city has set apart numerous areas as holy sites. This period of peace and pilgrimages lasted around 300 years.
5. In 614 the Persians stormed and plundered the city. Then in 637 Caliph Omar, an Arab, captured the city.
6. In 691 the Islamic Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the original Jewish Temple. So you see that this shrine has been there a long time.
7. In 1050 the Turks replaced the Arabs as leaders of Jerusalem. At that time they were semi-barbarians. They treated both the Jews and the Christians very badly — killing them and depriving them of any kind of citizenship.

8. Then in 1099, the Crusaders came, removed the “pagans” from the Holy Land, and established a “Christian Kingdom” which lasted for nearly 100 years. These people, under the direction of the Pope, came from Europe, France, England, Germany, Spain, and Portugal.
9. In 1187, the Arabs, under Saladin from Egypt, took the city back and held it for about 330 years.
10. In 1517, the Turks of the Ottoman Empire gained control of the Promised Land. In 1541, Suleiman the Magnificent rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem as they are today. Then for 400 years, from 1517 to 1917, they controlled this territory.
11. In 1917, when Great Britain conquered Jerusalem and its surrounding territories, Lord Allenby entered the city on foot, walking in front of his horse. He refused to ride his horse into Jerusalem because he regarded it as a Holy City. This was an exciting moment in Jewish history because under the British Mandate of the Balfour Declaration, Palestine was now open for Jewish immigration.
12. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was born. The British Mandate ceased, and Israel was “free” to decide its own destiny. Immediately there was a fight with the Arabs for control. Eventually, the city of Jerusalem was divided with the Old City being controlled by Jordan, and the New City being governed by the new Jewish state.

13. In 1967, after another battle with the Arabs, Israel took control of all Jerusalem for the first time in 2,030 years! Now if you don't think God's interested in cities, you need to look at Jerusalem. Isn't that just simply amazing, and they are still in control of their land today!

When Jesus was asked by his disciples about the coming of his Kingdom, his reply is recorded in three long chapters: Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. Here he foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem, and he warned his disciples to flee for their lives when they saw the Roman armies advancing their direction. This prediction was fulfilled in A.D. 70 when General Titus destroyed the city completely.

Then Jesus announced what would happen afterward. He said (speaking of the Jewish people) *they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled* (Luke 21:24). Jesus saw the day when Jerusalem would no longer be the capital of Israel; instead, it would be defeated and controlled by Gentiles (or non-Jewish people). This is precisely what happened — until May 1948. Then, as Jesus predicted, Israel was restored! The times of Gentile domination was over!

Jesus foresaw the day when the Jews would no longer be captives in foreign lands. He foresaw the day when the Jews would no longer be captives in their own land either. He could see them being free. The times of Gentile control would come to an end. And Jesus saw more. He could envision a time when the Messiah, the whole world's King, would return to earth and establish a worldwide Kingdom that would forever bring to an end all Gentile rule everywhere. That will be the greatest day the world has ever known; that

will be the day when Jesus Christ shall rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. Can you say, “Amen?”!

Israel’s Amazing History and Destiny

Jerusalem has been besieged forty times! Can you imagine it? Can you imagine any city being knocked down and cut to pieces forty different times. It has been completely destroyed at least four times — I mean completely gone without a single stone on top of another. One calamity has followed another for the last 3,000 years. It has been the most controversial city of all the ages. Conflicting forces rage around Jerusalem all of the time. It’s the enemy of many nations. And it’s even the enemy of Satan.

Today, Jerusalem is divided with deep resentments between the Arabs, the Jews and the Christians. Religious and political tensions run high all the time. It would be alien to the spirit of Jerusalem to be peaceful. Death, battles, terrorists, and armed sieges are the norm in Jerusalem. The quiet of Jerusalem is overhung by a sense of expectant destruction. Everybody in Jerusalem expects something bad to happen there daily. That’s just the nature of the city — its past, its present state, and its prophetic destiny.

But Jerusalem’s nightmare will not last forever. A future King — the Lord Jesus Christ — will rule there. Then it will have perfect peace! The Psalmist writes, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory will come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory (Psalm 24:7, 10).* The ultimate destiny of Jerusalem is peace and glory. Jesus died there. He rose again there. The Church was started there. And Jesus will return there to rule the earth from this city. I’m telling you that the focal point on planet earth is found in Jerusalem!

Chapter 13

Russia Makes a Blast

I believe God is in the revealing business and that He can reveal more in our day than He has revealed in the past. I mean He can make things clearer to us that were not so clear to some people in earlier generations. We are very glad to be alive in this moment of additional insights. The material in this lesson fits in this category because a few years ago people who dealt with prophecy didn't deal with the country of Russia at all; they didn't understand any of the prophecy that was coming in the future regarding that land. But today we are able to understand these prophecies better than people who lived in an earlier period.

A lot of the prophecy we've examined so far in this book has dealt with things already fulfilled. That's pretty simple to figure out. But in this study we are dealing with things that have not yet come to pass. They will be fulfilled in the future. And they involve the nation of Russia.

Ezekiel is the main prophet in the Bible who speaks about a nation in the "North," that is, a particular nation located North of Israel. When Ezekiel wrote his prophecies, he was situated in Babylon as a prisoner of war. He had been taken from his homeland of Israel, along with thousands of others, across the deserts to live in the world's most powerful empire

of his day. It was here that he was anointed by the Spirit and told details regarding the future of Russia.

Ezekiel was able to discern the future of Israel some 2,500 years beyond his own day. In chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine of his book he said that God would deal with the enemies of Israel. In the past God dealt with the nations that hated Israel, and He will do it again in the future. Not very many people understand the spiritual significance of God's dealings with nations, but a day is coming when large numbers of people will completely understand what God is doing because over twenty times God said through Ezekiel that He would do these things *so you might know I am the LORD*. That means God is going to reveal Himself in splendor and might. That means the world will know there is only one God, and He is our LORD!

Before Ezekiel describes Russia and her assault against Israel, the prophet speaks about seeing a valley of dry bones in chapter thirty-seven. This image represents the nation of Israel. According to this prophecy the Jews would be scattered to the four points of the compass and cease to be a nation. They would be like the dead and dry bones in an old cemetery. They would have no national life. But in the last days, in a period more than 2,500 years after Ezekiel's time, the prophet saw these bones coming together and coming back to life. Isn't that amazing?! Ezekiel is describing the rebirth of the nation of Israel! And this happened in our very own day — on May 14, 1948. So you can see we are dealing with some powerful prophecy here.

Introductory Prophecies about Russia

Now we will examine some of those remarkable prophecies in Ezekiel 38. God says to the prophet, “. . . set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him” (Ezekiel 38:2).

Gog. This is a person who is located in “the north” (Ezekiel 38:15). “North” in the Bible always means “North of Israel.” This ruler is identified as the “chief” prince of Meshech and Tubal. The word “chief” may not be an adjective, but a proper noun. It’s the Hebrew term, “Rosh,” which eventually became “Russia.” According to Bishop Lowther, “Rosh signifies the inhabitants of Scythia, from whom the modern Russians derived their name.” In other words, Gog (the name of a person) is the Russian ruler of the land of Magog, in which are Meshech and Tubal (two specific communities in Russia).

Land of Magog. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, states that the Greeks called the Scythians, “Magog.” They moved from Asia Minor into the south of Russia, having the Caucasian Mountains as their southern boundary.

Meshech and Tubal. Dr. Sale-Harrison says, “These are the progenitors of those who penetrated into South Russia and then spread into the northern parts of the same vast empire. The inhabitants of the Moschi Mountains, east of the Black Sea, are called Moschi, and Meshech and Tubal can be identified as Moscow and Tobolsk, the two great capital cities of East and West Russia. Moscow is derived from Muscovy, and Muscovy is derived from Meshech, while Tubal is the origin of Tobolsk.”

Bishop Lowther, Josephus and Dr. Sale-Harrison wrote many years ago, and I refer to them to show you that this teaching about Russia is not a new thought. Instead, it has been around for a long time.

I think the most important thing in the world for me is to know the future. I work on it all the time. I’m very interested in it. For instance, look at Ezekiel 38:4. “. . . I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws . . .” Here God is saying that He is going to do something on the international stage.

He is going to grab Russia and pull her to Israel for a horrific battle. But she won't fight alone. In the next two verses the Lord says He will also round up Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer and the house of Togarmah.

Ancient Persia is identified today as Iran. Ethiopia includes modern Sudan and northern Ethiopia. Dr. Sale-Harrison identifies Gomer as the place called "Gomeria," then "Cimmeria," and finally "Crimea," which is its present name. This is at the southern part of Russia, near the Black Sea. Other members of the Gomer family line advanced up the River Danube and populated the present land of Germany. In that area the territory was known as "the land of Gomer" or "Gomerland." Eventually, it came to be called Germany.

The house of Togarmah refers to the people who lived south of the Sea of Aral and between that sea and the Caspian Sea. This is in the southern portion of Russia and just north of Palestine.

According to this interpretation, Russia will align itself with other nations before it attacks Israel. There will be a coalition of nations: Russia, Germany, Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia and possibly others. All but two of these nations lie north or east of Israel. Other nations reside in the south. They will form a virtual semicircle around the Holy Land, with the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

Working together, these nations will enter Israel in the last days like a gigantic storm (Ezekiel 38:8-11). It looks like the Jews and their tiny nation will be obliterated. Then something happens no one could anticipate — God intervenes!

The Destiny of Russia

The doom of communism on the mountaintops of Israel is revealed in two chapters of Ezekiel: 38 and 39. The doom of the Russian alliance is inevitable. Examine the following

passages for yourself. Learn how the Lord will destroy these armies. Underline key ideas.

Son of man, prophesy and say unto God, Thus saith the Lord GOD: In that day when my people Israel dwell safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many peoples with thee . . . And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, like a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land (Ezekiel 38:14-16).

And it shall come to pass at the same time when God shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel . . . And I shall call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will enter into judgment against him with pestilence and with blood . . . Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 38:18-23).

Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog . . . I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee . . . Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy hordes, and the peoples that are with thee; I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured (Ezekiel 39:1-4).

So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people, Israel, and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel (Ezekiel 39:7).

Elsewhere within these two chapters it says that it will take Israel seven months to clear the land of all the dead bodies. The prophecy of Ezekiel also says it will take seven years to destroy and burn all of the weapons they find on the mountains of Israel. Then all Israel will know there is a God and His name is the LORD!

Why Doesn't God Stop Russia Now?

Now this is an interesting question. We could also ask, Why didn't God stop Germany? Why didn't God stop Japan? And so on. You have a will within you, and God will let it run its course. Then you can't blame this or that on God. You choose your own destiny. God doesn't choose your destiny for you; you must choose it for yourself.

Too many people think that man doesn't need God, and that man can take care of himself — he can live by his own strength. This simply is not true. And all of the evils in our world constantly remind us how desperately we need God.

These certainly are amazing days. God is setting the stage for the greatest drama of all time, and it's called *the end of the age*. I want to be ready! Do you?

Chapter 14

The United Nations & Prophecy

We have a very exciting teaching here. We hear about the United Nations almost every day in the news, but does that assembly of nations have a specific role in prophecy? Can the United Nations conceivably be identified as a part of a prophetic pattern for the future? Possibly so. Let's take a look.

The Birth of the United Nations World Government

After the ravages of that awful time known as World War II, when fifty million people were killed on the battle fields of the world, many people believed the survival of mankind was only possible if the nations would unite to solve problems. So on April 25, 1945, representatives from fifty nations met in San Francisco, and they created the United Nations Charter for a world government.

It was decided that the headquarters for the United Nations would be on the East River of New York City. This area used to be nothing but slums. And there were four slaughterhouses on the original site. But that has all changed. Today, the main building is a 39-story glass and marble skyscraper. They call it "The World Capital." The twenty-five acres of land on which the buildings sit cost over

\$7,000,000. They were paid for by the Rockefeller family. Of course, if just the land were bought back today it would cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

The United Nations represents the largest effort in human history to unite the governments of the whole world. It is an incredibly complex and expensive undertaking. Every year they spend billions of dollars in an attempt to secure peace among the nations.

Why do the nations of the world desire the creation of an organization like the United Nations? Why do they think it is necessary? There are several answers to these questions.

First, there is the issue of world communication. The nations of the world today, in terms of communication, are closer than they have ever been. At this moment you can speak to almost anyone in any place of the world in a matter of just two or three seconds. This is the first time in history man has had such a profound ability to communicate. We have so many satellites in space that we can see what's going on in every part of the world as it happens. Communication, in certain respects, has brought us together.

Second, there is the issue of fear. All the nations in the world have a fear of an atomic war that would actually eliminate the whole human race. So they formed an organization in the hopes that diplomacy, rather than bombs, would resolve conflicts between nations.

Third, there is the issue of peace. Everyone has a desire to live peacefully and to be free, so the founders of the United Nations thought that this organization might be able to assist in achieving that goal.

As it turns out, the concept of the United Nations is not an original idea. The first attempt at a world union took place at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4). God personally brought that self-centered ambition to an end. Then, as early as A.D. 1305, different philosophers set forth the concept

of a one-world government in their writings. For centuries man has asked the question, “Why can’t we live together in peace?” Well, the answer is sin and greed. You can’t live together peacefully if you hate one another or if you want to take what the other person has. That’s the problem. It isn’t a *government* issue; it’s a *heart* issue. And until we see that, there won’t be any hope for peace in the world!

In the twentieth century there have been two international organizations that have sought to unite the world and bring it peace. You are aware of both of them. The first one was The League of Nations. I remember when it was created after World War I. I’ve been to those beautiful buildings in Switzerland, but it was just a symbol without any real power. Hitler laughed at it when he set out to take over Europe. Then you have the United Nations, which exists today.

You might say, “Is there anything wrong with the United Nations?” Well, let’s look at it. For all practical purposes, the works of the United Nations are a human attempt (without God) to save man from his problems. If man needs one thing on the face of this earth, he needs salvation. But here’s the problem: you cannot save man with only man’s abilities. You need God!

What’s Wrong with the United Nations?

In the foundational meetings in San Francisco that formulated the charter for the United Nations, they refused to begin any session with prayer. Russia said they would not go to the table to discuss anything if prayer was involved. Stalin was in power in Russia during those days. He was a radical atheist, and he said if the United Nations was going to include prayer he would walk out. So the United Nations was born in an atmosphere that refused to pray. And this is true today as well. No session in the United Nations has ever been opened in prayer.

Man, since his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, has contrived to enter paradise again and again. He wants utopia — world peace — and he wants to achieve it by his own strength. He wants to achieve it without the help of God. And what have been the results? Disaster after disaster. Man has not, will not, and cannot find peace without God!

The majority of the members of the United Nations today are not the least bit Christian. Most of them are what we call pagans, idol worshipers, and infidels. They don't believe in the God of the Bible. They are heathen nations. More than that, they bring their own religion with them when they join the United Nations. And they demand the same respect for their religion that a member from another nation and another religion has. Can you imagine trying to create an organization on this basis?

They do not believe the verse from the Bible that says, "thou shalt love thy neighbor." That's not in their religion; it's only in the Christian religion, and this religion is not permitted to have any influence in their dealings. The Lord Jesus Christ is nowhere in the United Nations. He is not allowed in any room or in any meeting in that place.

Consequently, most of the people in the United Nations do not understand the moral philosophy of Christianity, yet their vote is as powerful as the nations with a Christian foundation. Representatives from the most pagan nations on earth have a vote that is as powerful as the vote from any other nation. What that means is this: the United Nations is ultimately controlled by those who reject the Bible, reject God and reject the Lord Jesus Christ!

The United Nations harbors a deep resentment and hatred for the Bible and for Christians (I mean *real* Christians, not just people who dub themselves "Christians"). They don't like Israel, and they don't like the Jews. So they have a lot of dislikes which are the opposite of true believers.

The United Nations also has a consuming desire to compel all countries to conform to their own laws and regulations, which have no relationship to God's law and regulations. They want to create a one-world bank and a one-world currency. In that way the world's wealth will be centralized in that one pagan organization. They want their own military so they can control any nation by force. They even desire to create United Nations textbooks so they can teach all of the world's children their philosophies. They are very ambitious!

Conditions Among the Nations that Will Exist at the Time of Christ's Coming and the End of the World

What will the world be like in the future that will cause most modern nations to accept a single ruler and treat him as if he were some kind of god? Look at 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

“The son of perdition” is the Antichrist. You ought to mark that down. Some people don’t even know where to find that verse. Here it is. Remember it. He is called the “son of perdition” because he will be the leader of the lost people in the world. He will know more than anyone else about how to go to hell and how to take others with him. He is also called the “man of sin” because he is the personal embodiment of total sin.

The Antichrist will be something like Hitler. He bewitched Europe until the people there couldn’t see following anybody but him. The Antichrist will possess that same kind of unusual influence. He will even claim a kind of divinity, and the unstable lost people of the world will believe what he says because of the demonic power operating in his life.

At the present time the Antichrist is being held back by the power and force of a triumphant church. No Antichrist can rule the world as long as there are millions of Christians rebuking him every day. So, the rapture of the church will have to take place before the fullness of sin appears. Rebellion will not reach its peak and hatred for God will not be complete until the Lord takes away His people from the earth.

At the end of the reign of the Antichrist, the Lord will consume him at the battle of Armageddon. It will be the greatest war ever fought on planet earth. No other battle will ever compare with the intensity of this one.

The earthly leader in this battle will not be called “Antichrist” by the people in the world. That’s what the Bible calls him. He might be called the Secretary of the United Nations. By the time he arrives, this Secretarial position may be so powerful that he will be able to control the whole world through that single organization.

Notice the way the Bible describes his power. It will be power from Satan. It will include signs and lying wonders.

And the people of the world will be completely gullible to his leadership. I'm glad I belong on Jesus' side. I'm on the winning side!

Other Scriptures

In Revelation 17:12 it says, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." Here we see that the Antichrist will have other leaders around him. They will be his Vice Presidents or Managers. Then, we read this is Revelation 13:7-8 and 11-18.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

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

According to this passage, if you're not sold out to God, then you will be sold out to the devil. You can call yourself religious, but if the Holy Spirit doesn't dwell inside of you, then you won't be able to resist the Antichrist.

Next, these verses talk about "another beast." Actually, there will be three persons who will be very active during this period of great tribulation: (1) the Antichrist, who will handle political issues, (2) the false prophet, who will deal with spiritual matters, namely the worldwide worship of the Antichrist, and (3) the image of the Antichrist which comes to life and persecutes people who will not follow the Antichrist. These will be the three major powers of the last days.

In some way the Antichrist will experience a deadly wound, then it will be healed by the devil's power. Satan can do many things to convince people to follow him. He will use some kind of magic, and many people will follow him. So many people are gullible. God doesn't want you and me to be like that. He wants you and me to be full of the Holy Spirit; He wants you and me to be full of the Word of God; He wants you and me to walk in righteousness; He wants you and me to be separated from this world! If we are on right terms with God, whatever happens, we'll be ready!

In this chapter we're dealing with the largest political organization in the world: The United Nations. That is what it's called today. It could change its name in the future. It could even move to another location. These things we don't know, but we do know that out of this whole system of man's ideas about a world government there's going to come an arch enemy against God and against Christians.

You know, God doesn't want us to fold our hands and simply wait for the coming of the Lord. That is not right. We must redeem the times because the days are evil. We must save all the people that we possibly can. Just last week in my meetings more than a thousand people came forward and gave their hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, we are living in days that are grim, but we are also living in days that are blessed. I'm just glad to be on God's side. How about you?

You also should notice in this passage from Revelation that no one will be able to do business unless they take the mark of the beast, which many people have interpreted to mean the number 666. Some people have cleverly made this number fit a particular Pope or Hitler or Mussolini or someone else. You don't need to figure it out. You don't need to bother with it since you'll be in heaven at that time; you will have been raptured. The most important thing you can do is win the lost — get people out of hell!

In Daniel 8:23-25 it says this: *And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. 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 holy people. 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.

Man's transgressions have not yet reached their peak. They're moving in that direction very swiftly — morally, religiously, politically and economically. It's moving in that direction, but it hasn't hit its capacity yet. In the latter times the transgressions of the nations will come to the full, they will reach their maximum. Then God will say, like He did in the days of Noah, "That's enough!"

The Antichrist in this passage ("a king of fierce countenance") will be clever. He will have a unique understanding of things because the devil will enable him to know things. But with this knowledge he will use it to line his own pockets economically and then to kill anyone who gets in his way. He will be especially cruel to the Jews and to the holy people on the earth.

Then he will go too far. He will challenge "the Prince of princes." That's the Lord Jesus Christ! He will win battles with men for a season, but he will not win in his contest against God and His Kingdom. Christ will completely defeat him, and he will be established as the rightful King of all kings and Lord of all lords! Finally, from the one true Prince of peace will come peace for the whole world! Lasting peace cannot come and will not come any other way.

Chapter 15

The World Welcomes the Antichrist

When we get to heaven, and they show us the movies of the past, we'll be able to sit and watch the drama of the fall of Lucifer. This event was so dramatic that nothing has ever happened on earth like it. This angelic creature was filled with such beauty and wisdom, that no other creature was quite like him. He was in a class by himself. Then pride entered into him. He looked at himself and liked what he saw. In fact, he liked himself more than anything else. He even liked himself more than his Creator, God!

Many church members do the same thing. They say, "I'm a good person. Look at me." And the moment they do that, they are following the path of Lucifer. We need to know that any goodness within us did not originate with us, but with God who created us.

Lucifer's pride caused him to be removed from heaven. His beauty turned into ugliness. Now the ugliest thing in the universe is Lucifer; the next ugliest thing are the angels that fell into deep sin with him. If you want to know what they look like, go into pagan temples. They have seen these dirty, filthy creatures. They make images of them, and they worship them as idols.

As a result of Lucifer's actions, an antagonism began in heaven between God and Satan that goes beyond human comprehension. The culmination of all this demonic hatred will reach its peak when Lucifer makes his last stand against Jesus Christ. And he will do this through a person the Bible calls the Antichrist.

There are people who think the Antichrist is simply an idea, some kind of philosophy. You can be sure he is not a philosophy. He is a person, a real human being who is enlightened and empowered by Satan. Everything about him will be demonically generated: his eyes, his grin, his movements, everything. His total being will be devoted to spreading and fulfilling Satan's lies. You had better know the truth from God's Word, or you will be deceived. Anyone who rejects the Bible will automatically fall prey to his lies.

Other people think the Antichrist is just a political system, but that's not true either. The Antichrist will be a man. Maybe he will rise up through the United Nations or the European Common Market. We're not sure. But we are sure that he will be a person who is made of flesh and bones, just like you and me.

Still others say that the Antichrist is a metaphor or a mere form of speech. They think he is just an influence in the world. That idea is false, too. He's more than an influence projected by this age. He's more than a spirit of anarchy. He's a human being, probably a handsome person.

And the Antichrist is not the devil, as some people falsely imagine. Instead, he is the devil's answer to God. It was God the Father who sent Jesus into the world to become its Savior, and the devil will send his own representative into the world as a counterfeit savior. Then the world will have to decide which "Savior" it wants. Of course, the world is making that decision right now. Christians are taking God's Savior, and everyone else is taking Satan's savior.

Unquestionably, the global stage is now being set for the diabolic appearing of this person that God calls the “man of sin.” He personifies all iniquity. He’s the total of everything bad. And many people will like just that. They don’t want to be good like God. They want to sin. This is even true in the church. That’s why the Bible says there will be a great falling away from the faith in the last days (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Millions of people who belong to churches are not true Christians. They are gullible, and they are ready to follow Satan’s lies. You had better know more than that bunch or you’ll get trapped along with them. You had better study your Bible and follow it!

Why Must There Be An Antichrist?

When mankind refuses God’s Christ, our Savior, then there is no alternative but to receive the devil’s christ — the Antichrist. In other words, if you reject what God offers, then you automatically accept what is left. The choice is made the instant you reject Christ. At that point you will follow the Antichrist because you won’t have any other option. If you turn away from the “day,” then the only thing that is left is the “night.” There is no in-between. Either you are a follower of Jesus Christ, or you will be a follower of the Antichrist.

This generation has planted the seeds of universal moral breakdown, of hatred and rioting, of witchcraft and of heathen religions. We have pushed God to the background of our personal lives and of our total culture. That means we have actually prepared ourselves for the Antichrist. Because of our global rebellion against God we have created the way for the arrival of the Antichrist.

Today, we have heathen religions springing up in areas of our own nation which were once totally Christian. Its worse in England, its worse in France, and its worse in Germany,

but we're moving as fast as we can to catch up with them. Soon, the whole world will be ready for the appearance of the Antichrist.

Our country and much of the world says it can get along without God. You see it in our schools; we don't want God in them at all. You see it in our businesses; we don't want God in our dealings. You can see it in our laws; we don't want God or the Bible or the Church to touch anything. You can see it in families; we don't want our children to learn the fear of the Lord. We are opposing the Christian faith at every turn. We are fighting God as if He were our worst enemy!

There isn't one percent of our whole nation today that understands the judgment of God. The truth is if you do evil you will have to pay for it. But most people resist that idea. They don't believe in Divine punishment. So we have set the stage ourselves for the time of the Antichrist. The first chapter of Romans describes our generation (especially verses 18-32). This is a generation of people who are reprobate in their minds. They simply cannot be reasoned with!

The World Desires a Supreme Leader

The whole world is looking for a supreme leader today. Our generation is being constantly conditioned emotionally, spiritually, morally, economically and politically for the appearing of a person who will rule the world. You don't have to call him a dictator, but a ruler, a deceptive and powerful ruler. And when he appears, everyone will be glad to see him because he will seem to have the answers for the world's problems.

Modern society, worldwide, is clamoring for a superman, a charismatic personality who will lead them. Whether or not he loves God doesn't mean anything to them because

they themselves don't know or love God. Finally, when the Antichrist appears, he will present himself as a champion of the common people. He will be the one who will seem to be able to lift them out of all their distress. So the people will accept him.

The Antichrist Will be a Replica of His Generation

I believe in every generation you get what belongs to you. For example, the Presidents we elect are a replica of the people who voted them into office. If the majority of the people in our nation are without God, then they will put in the Presidency a person without God. If the people are bad, they will elect a bad president.

The Antichrist will completely represent the popular conception of life at the time of his appearing. He will not seem to be a strange person. In fact, he will seem quite normal to the majority of the people. Millions of people around the earth will adore him and say, "He's just like me. He believes just like I do." Antichrist will be a perfect reflection of the soul and the mind of the people, his followers.

What Will the Antichrist Be?

Economically. The Antichrist, in a seemingly miraculous way, will bring the world tremendous prosperity. That is what will captivate the whole world. You find that in Daniel verse 8:25. *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.* The "craft" in this passage refers to global prosperity. By some special arrangement for "peace" he's going to stop people from fighting, and this will cause many people and nations to prosper.

Politically. Revelation 13:1-10 says this:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast

rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (verse 1). The sea represents multitudes of people. The ten horns and crowns stand for the ten nations that will be recreated in the last days from the Roman Empire. The European Common Market has already created a situation that could clear the road for the arrival of this person called the Antichrist.

And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear; and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority (verse 2). This imagery goes back to the strength of the ancient empires (Daniel 7). In the political arena the Antichrist will possess the powers of the world's past greatest nations. The dragon, of course, is the devil. This means that the Antichrist will be guided and supplied by the world's ultimate source for evil.

And I saw one of the heads as if it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and the entire world wondered after him (verse 3). This will be something very remarkable. Perhaps he will be assassinated, then rise up from that assassination and show the world that he is immortal. He is the one who should rule the world because you can't kill him.

And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him (verse 4)? The people in the world at this time will actually worship the devil and the Antichrist. That shows you how far from God they have gotten.

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months (verse 5). The great strength and power of the Antichrist will last for seven years. For the

first three-and-one-half years he will develop his kingdom. Then in the final three-and-a-half years he will display all of his evil nature and plans. This seven-year period is called “the great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14).

And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven (verse 6). The Antichrist, like many of the cultures in the world today, will have nothing good to say about God or the church or heaven.

And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given to him over all kindred's, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (verses 7-8). Isn't that amazing? Everyone will worship him. We're living in that dreadful moment when the fullness of all corruption beginning with Cain and coming down to the Antichrist is going to be manifest. We're living in that time immediately prior to Divine judgment!

If any man have an ear, let him hear (verse 9). You should put a circle around that little verse. It's short, but it means everything. Most Americans will not hear — they will not hear, they will not hear, they will not hear! There's no use trying to persuade them that they are in sin. They will not listen. America is drunk on pleasure. All they want is entertainment and more entertainment. They watch game after game on television. But when a baseball game is over, what do you have on the inside? Nothing. When a football game is over, what do you have inside? Nothing. You would be better working in the basement and making something than watching television. That way, the next day you have something. I hate to do anything that doesn't have something left over the next day. If I sit down and write for an hour, I can sit down and look at it the rest of my life. If I

sit down and watch something, when it's over, it's finished and I don't have anything. I don't like anything that doesn't have a lasting relationship with it. Are you listening?!

He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (verse 10). When everything is finished, people are going to reap whatever they sow. If they sow evil, they will reap evil.

Morally. The Antichrist will be morally bankrupt. In Daniel 11:37 it says he will have no desire for women. That means he will be homosexual. He will be what the world is. Do you want to know something? Jesus said, as it was in the days of Lot, so will it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:28). That's one of the biggest fulfillments of prophecy. In Sodom, it was popular to be a homosexual. And that's exactly the way it will be in the last days as well.

When I was a boy, if a man would have been a homosexual, the rest of the men in the community would have taken a strap and beaten the daylights out of him. Then they would say, "Don't ever let us see that kind of misconduct from you again or we'll just kill you next time." They wouldn't call the police. They would take care of it themselves. I'm telling you times have changed, and you don't even realize it. We condone everything today. We'll tolerate anything. We've fed on immorality so long that we don't even know how to think straight. Listen, if you don't stand up against evil, then evil will clobber you. Don't say, "I can't do anything about it." You could if you tried. God wants you to change your way of thinking and your way of acting.

You say, "Brother Sumrall, you can't get a lot of people to come to church if you talk like that." Well, I'll say what God wants me to say as long as I live. Those who like it can enjoy it, and those that don't can just stay away from it. But

someday I'll stand before God with clean hands regarding sin in the last days.

Religiously. Daniel 11:37 specifically says that the Antichrist will not regard the God of his fathers. Then in Revelation 13:6-8 it says that his mouth is full of blasphemies. His lifestyle will be the opposite of Jesus' lifestyle. And the people of the world will praise him for being brazen in his sins and for being uninhibited. The psychiatry of the day will pronounce him perfectly adapted for the conditions of his time.

The Antichrist will have a partner whom the Bible calls the false prophet. He may have a fancy name given to him by the world, but when God looks at him, all He sees is a liar. He is so twisted in his thinking that he will actually attempt to persuade the world to worship the Antichrist. But his lies will not last long. After three-and-a-half years he will be cast into the lake of fire, along with the Antichrist (Revelation 19:20; 20:10)!

Conclusion

I'm sorry for you who live in such a time as this. If you could have lived a hundred years ago, maybe you wouldn't have traveled over ten miles from where you were born. You would have known all the people in your area, and you would have had a pretty comfortable time on planet earth. We don't live there anymore. We live in the last days — the very final days of the Gentile age. We're finally climaxing the six "days" of man's story upon the face of this earth. We're finalizing it right now. You need to be stronger right now than in any other generation in history. You need to be firmer than any other generation in history.

There is a lot of apathy in the world today. We're weak. We say, "What will be will be." But it doesn't have to be that way at all. The devil cannot make you do anything you

don't want to do. He that's in you is greater than he that's in the world (1 John 4:4). Until the Bride of Christ is taken to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, the devil has no authority that you cannot push down. Fight back. Resist sin in yourself and in your world. Don't tolerate it!

Chapter 16

The Rapture and Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ

We are examining one of the most exciting subjects that anyone can study. We are exploring a lesson that very few people know anything about. We are looking at the rapture and the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible calls this the “blessed hope”: *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).*

Most people don’t realize that there will be two phases to the blessed hope . . . there will be two separate appearances of Jesus Christ in the future. In his first appearing, he will not touch the earth at all. He will remain in the sky and rapture the church. In his second appearing, he will come to earth, defeat the Antichrist and set up his glorious Kingdom. Jesus has promised to return, and he will do just that. But he will do it in two stages. If you can get that image deep enough inside of you, it will change you forever. It could even change the whole world, if we would allow it to do so!

What Christ’s Second Coming is Not

First, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is not

the same thing as regeneration. Some people teach that the second coming of Christ takes place when you are born again . . . when he comes to live inside of you at the time of your salvation. No, that's not what the Bible teaches.

Second, the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is not experienced at a Christian's death when his spirit goes to be with the Lord. Your dying has nothing to do with the Lord's return.

Third, Christ's second coming is not the same thing as the Day of Pentecost or the time when you are filled with the Holy Spirit. There are churches that teach that the second coming of Christ took place on the day of Pentecost. Presumably, he came back in the form of the Holy Spirit. But this is not the truth. God is going to do exactly what He said He would do, and no one has to twist the Bible to make it say something it doesn't mean. The second coming of Christ is the second coming of Christ!

Fourth, the return of Christ is not the same thing as his conquests and victories in the earth. No, it has to do with his taking the Church to be with him. It has to do with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Fifth, the Lord's second coming is not to be associated with his divine revelation of truth. Some people say that the second coming of Christ is simply a personal revelation of the truth in the Bible. In other words, when you understand the messages of the Bible, then he has come back to you. This is nonsense. The second coming of Christ has nothing to do with your understanding of the Bible. It is much larger and much more profound than that.

All Future Events are Related to Christ's Coming

Before Jesus returns, everything written in the Bible concerning him has to be fulfilled. He cannot come back until all of the prophecies regarding his life are completed.

In Luke 24:4 Jesus said, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” So whatever there is that is written in the Old Testament about Christ has to come to pass before he can return.

When the time is right, once Jesus has done everything the Scriptures say he must do, then he will return. And this is not just the teaching of Bible prophecy, Jesus himself has made a positive commitment to us that he will return. In John 14:3 Jesus said, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” We can stand strong on this personal promise from the Lord Jesus Christ. If he said it, then we had better believe it!

The promise of Jesus is not limited to Christians. His second coming is for the Jews as well. Jesus is not just the hope of the Church; he is the hope of Israel as well (though they don’t know it right now). If you will read Romans 11, you’ll find out that God still has dealings in store for Israel. He is not finished with them. Someday in the future, around the time of Jesus’ second coming, they will finally trust in the Lord and be saved.

Sinners don’t have any such hope. To sinners the world is pretty bleak today, but not to us. We have a hope. We have a hope that Jesus is going to come back; our Commander and Chief is going to return to earth. He’s going to be the world’s King of kings and Lord of lords. He’s going to return and rule this earth for a thousand years!

The Rapture and the Revelation

There are going to be two future appearances of Christ. You must get that fact settled on the inside of you. The *rapture* and the *revelation* are not the same thing.

- The *rapture* is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. “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 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.” When the Lord returns to the sky for his own saints, his Bride, that’s the time of the *rapture*. From that time forward there will never be any separation between the believer and the Lord. We will be with him throughout eternity!
- The *revelation* is described in 1 Thessalonians 3:13. “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” At the *rapture* Jesus will come *for* his saints, but at the *revelation* he will come *with* his saints.

Rapture and Revelation Differences

The second coming of Christ takes place in two stages. They are not the same, and you need to know the difference.

- At the time of the rapture, Jesus will come to the sky above the earth. He will come for his saints, and no one will see him. Finally, there will be no more Baptists, no more Methodists, no more Presbyterians, no more Episcopalians, no more Roman Catholics, and no more Pentecostals. There will just be saints of God! The Church will be one! That should make us shout, “Hallelujah!”

- At the time of the revelation, Jesus will come to the earth, and he will be seen by everyone. Matthew 24:30 says, “And 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.” Matthew 24:27 says, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” So it is clear that at the time of Jesus’ revelation, he will be seen by everyone in the world. This will be no secret appearing, like the time of the rapture.
- Another difference between the rapture and the revelation of Christ involves the time when they will take place. The rapture will occur *before* the great tribulation. The revelation will happen *after* the great tribulation. There will be at least a three-and-a-half-year period separating these two events.
- Finally, there will be a different purpose for each coming of the Lord. In the rapture Jesus will come to take his blood-washed saints with him back to heaven. 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, “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.” But in the revelation, Jesus will descend to the earth to deliver Israel, judge the nations and set up his everlasting Kingdom. Joel 3:12 says, “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.” And we read this in Matthew 25:31. “When the Son of man shall

come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.”

The Fact of the Revelation of Christ

In many places in the Old Testament the prophets spoke about the unique revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, Isaiah 59:20 says, “And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.” This is a reference to Jesus Christ. When he comes back, he will place his feet on the Mount of Olives, and it will split wide open. When that happens, water will come gushing from underground. A scientist from Jerusalem told me that they have found a sea of fresh water directly under Jerusalem, but they have no equipment that can go down deep enough to bring it out. Well, that will be very simple when the Lord touches that mountain and it splits wide open. You won’t need any wells. You won’t need any human equipment. The water will flow to the East and heal the Dead Sea. Then another portion of it will flow to the West into the Mediterranean Sea. I would like to be around to see some of those things, wouldn’t you?

In Jeremiah 23:5 the Bible says, “Behold, the days shall come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” That branch is the Lord Jesus Christ. All I wanted you to know in this point is that the revelation of Jesus Christ is not mentioned in only one or two places in the New Testament. Instead, the prophets of the Old Testament gave witness to it even before he came the first time. In fact, there are more references in prophecy to Jesus’ second coming than his first coming!

Daniel 2:44-45 says, “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people,

but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” Here God is telling us that someday the kingdoms of this world will come to an end. When that happens, He will set up His own everlasting Kingdom. And Jesus Christ will reign in this Kingdom as the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

The Purposes for His Coming at Revelation

First, when Jesus Christ returns to earth, he will come to destroy the Antichrist who is ruling over the entire world (Revelation 19:11-21). Aren’t you glad that sinners and sin will not triumph forever? Aren’t you glad that Jesus will crush them?

Second, when the Lord comes back, he will separate the tares from the wheat. Matthew 13:30 says, “Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in the bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” We see here that there’s going to be a total and everlasting separation between sinners and saints. You know there’s going to be sadness in the home where the wife serves God and the husband doesn’t . . . where the children serve God, but the parent’s don’t. There’s going to be an awful time of separation when Jesus returns to earth. Those who don’t sincerely love God will go one way, and those who are devoted to God with all their hearts will go the other way. No longer will you ever sit together. No longer will you ever be together. There will be an eternal separation.

Third, when Jesus appears in his revelation, he will regather and restore Israel. Many people think that the time of the Jews is over. Actually, the greatest moment in the history of Judaism is yet to come. It's finest moment, it's most glorious moment is just ahead. They missed the big day when the Messiah came to them in the person of Jesus two thousand years ago. But they won't miss him when he comes the second time. The Lord says through the prophet Zechariah, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 12:10; 13:1).

It doesn't matter what Israel had done; it was her unbelief that broke her relationship with God. They would not believe their own prophets. That's their problem today; they won't believe. So, for two thousand years they have experienced hell on earth. They have been persecuted by almost every nation on the face of this earth. But God is going to restore them. You may think it is impossible for the Jewish nation to be saved. But the Bible says they are going to be saved in one day. God will personally pour out His grace upon them. They will finally recognize their sins and turn to Jesus Christ for forgiveness. God will forgive them. It will be a mighty forgiveness!

How Jesus is Coming Back

In Matthew 24:30 it says, "And 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." When the

people see that they missed it, then they will mourn. These men who run the American schools are a bunch of jackasses. They wouldn't let the Bible in the front door, they wouldn't let the children study the Bible, then when it's too late, they will recognize their stupidity and they will mourn. They will cry out: "Why didn't we have enough sense to know the Bible is true?"

The Bible is the only book that will take you to heaven. Say it: "One book!" We get to heaven by that book, and you will not get to heaven by any other writing. Everyone needs to know that fact, including our school children!

Revelation 19:11 says Christ will return on a white horse. That means he will come with remarkable authority to judge and make war. When he comes, he will take over!

In Isaiah 11:4 it says, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of this mouth, and with the breath of this lips shall he slay the wicked." Did you know that in Zaire, which is one of the poorest nations in the world, their President is the seventh richest man on the face of the earth? He's worth several billion dollars. His land has gold and diamonds. He puts them in an airplane and takes them to Switzerland. He lives in unthinkable luxury, while his people are starving to death. When the Lord returns to earth, those people are going to get their judgment!

When Jesus returns, he is also going to defeat the dragon, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation 19:8-14). Finally, the devil, the Antichrist and the phony religious leader will get what they deserve. They will be cast into the pit and left there for a thousand years.

Lastly, when Jesus comes back, he will rule the nations with a "rod of iron" (Revelation 19:5). No longer will sinners or sin oversee this world. Jesus will rule it in righteousness!

The Manner of His Coming

Here are a few more closing details about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ:

- It will be immediate, like lightning (Matthew 24:27).
- It will be public, with everyone seeing it (Matthew 24:30).
- It will be brilliant, with a radiant light (Habakkuk 3:4).
- It will take place at the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4). This is where Jesus will return.
- He will come with eyes that resemble fire (Revelation 1:14).
- He will come with many crowns on his head (Revelation 19:12).
- He will come with a vesture dipped in blood from judging the nations (Revelation 19:13).
- He will come with armies following him on white horses (Revelation 19:14).
- He will come with these designations: Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11), Word of God (Revelation 19:13), Lamb (Revelation 17:14), and King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14).

The most important thing in front of us is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of the future is found in the return of our Lord. This is the blessed hope, and we should keep this hope burning like a fire inside of us!

Chapter 17

Some Taken; Some Left

It is a great honor to explain the Word of God, and we thank you for being a student of the Word. There are so many people today who do not study the Scriptures, and so they don't have an answer in the time of trouble. But you are different. You will be able to point people in the right direction, especially in these last days, because you have taken the time to study.

We are in the middle of a very exciting topic. It's called the *rapture* and the *revelation* of the Lord Jesus. The word "rapture" is not in the Bible, but that's not necessary. The reality of the experience is there (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). It simply refers to the snatching away of the universal Church, which will possibly take place sometime during the tribulation period. When that happens, we will go to be with the Lord in the sky. Then we will enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Afterward, we will experience the Judgment Seat of Christ. There will be no sinners at that judgment. Only the righteous will be there. At that time the Lord Jesus will give us our rewards and our positions of service in the millennial kingdom.

Soon after that special ceremony we will come back to earth with the Lord, riding white horses to fight the Antichrist and the nations that have stood with him. This is the *revelation* of Christ to the world. And it will take place approximately seven years after the time of the *rapture*.

These are two different and remarkable events. In the first one, Jesus does not touch the earth. He only appears in the sky, and he removes his Church from the earth so she can be with him. Then, a little later, we shall come back to earth with him. At that time every eye shall see him.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins - An Introduction

When Jesus gave this parable, he was speaking only to his own disciples, not to the crowds or to unbelievers. This means that this parable is for you. This is what it says:

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight, there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go yet rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. Be he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh (Matthew 25:1-13).

The key word in this parable is found in verse thirteen: *watch*. When the Son of man comes (that is, when Jesus returns at the rapture), some people will be ready and others will be unprepared. Those who are ready will be taken; those who are unprepared will be left behind.

Some people who are left will miss the rapture because they have been deceived. Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matthew 24:4). When you don't walk any longer in God's Word, you'll be deceived. You may think you're safe, but no one is safe who walks away from the Scriptures.

Others will miss the rapture because they lose hope of the Lord's return. We read about this in 2 Peter 3:4. "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." There are people in the church who are not ready for the rapture. They keep thinking that nothing ever changes, and they begin to doubt that the Lord will come back. There are people who will read this book who feel the same way. They haven't prepared for the rapture. Their oil has run out. So when the rapture comes, they will be left.

In Noah's day there were many more people left than were taken. They heard the preaching of Noah. For a hundred years he preached righteousness to the people, but when God came, he and his family were the only ones who entered the ark. The animals had more sense than the humans did. When God told them to get into the ark, they marched in. Noah did not have to round them up; they came. They

came in the right numbers — either by twos or by sevens. But almost all of the people stayed outside. They wouldn't go in. So some people were taken, and some people were left.

The same thing will happen when the Lord returns at the rapture. Many people living on earth will have heard sermon after sermon (maybe more than a thousand of them), but they won't be prepared. They won't be ready. And God won't take them. They'll be left behind.

Jesus also taught that the day of the rapture will be like the days of Lot when judgment came to Sodom and Gomorrah. There might have been thousands and thousands of people living in the area where Lot lived, but only three people survived when the Lord appeared: just Lot and his two daughters. Even Lot's wife didn't escape the judgment because she loved the lifestyle of Sodom more than the voice of God!

Sometimes, because of a death, we have to say goodbye to our daughter or son, or our mother or father. Sometimes we have to say goodbye to an uncle or an aunt. And sometimes we have to say farewell to a very precious husband or wife. But what we are discussing here is even more serious than that. This is the *last* goodbye. This is it! You will never see them again. It's an everlasting separation. Some will be taken to safety; some will be left for judgment.

It was Jesus who said there would be two in the field working; one will go up in the rapture and one will stay behind and go through the terrible tribulation (Matthew 24:40). The one who goes up in the rapture won't be running through the streets of heaven saying, "O my God, I lost my loved ones." No; there's going to be total joy and total happiness in heaven whether you're there or not. Nobody up there is going to be bereaved because you didn't make it. If you don't make it, that's up to you. Your decision to stay behind won't diminish

the joy of those who are prepared to go. God wants you to join Him in heaven, but if you decide to love this world more than heaven, then heaven will get along without you.

What I want you to know is this: you've heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you've been warned. So for God's sake (and your own!) be sure you are prepared for the rapture!

Preachers, deacons, elders, Sunday school teachers, *everyone* listen to me. God wants us all to be ready. I know preachers who used to be ready, but they're not ready now. They don't live right, and when the rapture comes, they'll be left. Titles won't get you ready for the rapture. You'll need more than a position in the church. You'll need a new heart, a prepared heart.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins - More Details

Now let's look again at the parable of the ten virgins. Let's learn more of the details, along with some valuable lessons for our lives today.

1. Before the call of the bridegroom, the wise and the unwise virgins looked very much alike. This scene really gets to me. When you think you know who's going up in the rapture and who's not going up, I'm afraid our opinions might be wrong. Only God knows for sure what's happening on the insides of people. Outwardly, we might look pretty much the same, but inwardly we might be very different.

Both the wise virgins and the foolish virgins looked identical. You couldn't say who was wise and not wise because they were all waiting for the bridegroom to come. Imagine it. All ten knew their Lord was coming. All ten recognized the importance of the event. All ten had lamps. All ten went forth to meet him. And all ten waited for his coming. But as they waited and waited for the bridegroom to appear, the unwise virgins ran out of oil. They were not

prepared when the Lord finally came. Their lamps were empty. And they were left.

My friend, if everybody in our nation who knew the Lord was coming would act like he's coming, you would have a spiritual revolution in this country, and you would have it immediately. We don't live up to our knowledge — that's what Jesus is getting at here. I can assure you in my own community if you were to go house to house and ask everybody if they were a Christian, the majority of them would say, "Yes." Then, ask them if they think it's alright to go to church. They'll say, "Sure. People ought to go to church." Ask them when they last went to church and they'll tell you, "Oh, it's been a while." Go deeper: "Why haven't you been in church?" They'll respond, "I didn't have time. I was too busy." That's the kind of people who are going to miss the greatest event since Jesus died on Calvary — the rapture. They aren't ready because they're too occupied with other things. Their oil has run out!

2. *There were ten virgins.* They were all part of the same group. They all belonged together. They even lived together. They looked alike, and no one could tell any difference between them. They all expected the bridegroom. But five were wise, and five were foolish. It isn't enough to belong to the right group. You'd better be wise too.

3. *They all had lamps.* Some Bible interpreters say that this refers to their spiritual experience in God. You can call it whatever you like: conversion or illumination or knowledge. What's important here is that they all had the equipment; everyone had a lamp. Everyone thought they were secure. Like the twelve apostles, each of them imagined they were spiritually safe, but one of them was lost. No one could tell that Judas was unprepared, but his "lamp" ran out of oil. He wasn't ready to die.

4. *They all went to meet the bridegroom.* All ten of the virgins did the same waiting on the bridegroom. Initially, it looked like all ten of them would be ready when he appeared. All of them were watchful in the beginning. It's amazing to see that all of them were doing the same thing, but that did not determine their destiny. What determined their destiny was being ready at the moment the bridegroom appeared. Those who were ready at that moment were taken, and those who were not prepared at that moment were left.

How many of us today, if Jesus were to come in the next two minutes, would say, "My God! What am I going to do?" Pause and think for a moment. Do you know at this very second that you're ready to meet Jesus? Be honest. Or, would you have to say of yourself, "I'm not sure." Before you finish this book, take the time to *prepare yourself*. Turn away from your sins. Ask Christ to forgive you of everything. Then pledge your faithfulness to him. Give him your whole heart and life. That will be the most important decision you will ever make!

5. *They all had oil in their lamps.* I'm sure these virgins looked so beautiful. They were identical. They each had lamps. They each had some oil. And five of them brought along extra oil just in case they might need it. They were better prepared than the foolish virgins who thought they could get by with a minimal amount of oil.

The ten virgins represent the church in the world. The five wise virgins stand for the church that had enough oil to last until the bridegroom returned. That's the church (and the Christian) that will be taken up when the Lord returns. That's the church (and the Christian) that had extra oil, extra anointing, extra power and extra wisdom from God. If you don't have the extra oil you're not going to make it all the way through to the time of the Lord's return. You don't know what the future holds. So you'd better be wise and get all of

the empowerment from God you can get. You'd better plan on a marathon race, not a sprint.

6. *The Bridegroom tarried.* I asked the Lord about this point. I was a little mean about it. I said, "God, when I was a youth, all of the full gospel preachers said Jesus is coming soon, but that bunch of preachers died, and Jesus didn't come. Then the next generation of Pentecostal preachers said Jesus is coming soon, and they all died. And that happened again in the next generation — my generation. So I was wandering, what's this *coming soon* business? It looks like we're a bunch of liars. What's going on?"

The Lord told me that the time before the rapture will be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:36-39). He said to me, "When I spoke to Noah and told him to build the ark, he was 500 years old. And when the flood came, he was 600 years old. My mercy and grace lasted 100 years." "That's interesting," I said. "Are we living in that 100 years of grace now?" I asked God. He said, "Yes." Then I asked Him if he would tell me when He got started on that count. He said, "No."

I don't know when the Lord's coming back, but I'm determined not to be found sleeping. I'm going to be alive, awake and alert. How about you?

7. *They all slumbered and slept.* This does not have an evil meaning. It was a natural thing for them to sleep because it was late at night.

8. *At midnight the cry was made.* At midnight you have the end of the oil, and you have the end of a day. You also have the beginning of new things. At midnight days change: today becomes yesterday, and tomorrow becomes today. It's at this point, when the old dispensation comes to a close and the new one begins, that Jesus will return. He will say, "That's enough!" And then he will make everything new.

9. *All the virgins rose.* When the cry was made to go out and meet the bridegroom, all of them got up and looked at their lamps. It was at this point that the unwise virgins saw their need. It's always interesting to see your need at the wrong time. Isn't that something? There are some people who mess their lives up for forty years, then they expect "Brother So and So" to fix them in four minutes. That's kind of hard. It's better to stay fixed up, you know. If you don't keep a tally on your life, you're not going to make it in the last hour. You're not going to have time to get clean. You'd better wash every day, you'd better live for Jesus every day.

Jesus said that the unwise virgins suddenly saw their need. They should have seen it much earlier, then they would have had plenty of time to fix the problem. But they didn't plan ahead. So they weren't ready when their Lord returned.

Some of us wish Jesus had come yesterday, but he didn't. And he may not come today. But I just want to tell you this: keep plenty of oil in your life. Stay filled with the Holy Spirit. Be ready today. Be ready tomorrow. Be ready every day. Be ready!

You say, "How in the world can we get ready?" Here's how: lay aside the things that are contaminating your life. If you are renting or going to see filthy movies, if you are getting messed up in filthy television, if you are looking at immoral sites on the internet, if you are taking illegal drugs, if you are controlled by alcohol, if you are addicted to gambling, if your speech is filled with swearing and taking the Lord's name in vain, if you are being unfaithful to your spouse, if your word cannot be trusted, and if you are guilty of similar sins, then you are not ready. Call out to God to save you, to forgive you and to head your life in a new direction!

10. *The unwise virgins begged for oil.* It's interesting to notice that the foolish virgins begged the wise virgins for oil.

They didn't know the source. Isn't that something? They were looking to people, not God. I can't give you my faith. You've got to get it yourself from the Lord. I can tell you what God has done for me, but faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). You've got to get the Word down inside of you if you're going to have faith.

I can you hear say, "Oh, I want faith like Smith Wigglesworth." No you don't. You wouldn't even like him if he were here. He's too rough for most people. He wouldn't even let me in his front door the first time I came to see him because I had a newspaper under my arm. He said, "I don't like lies in my house. I don't permit lies in my house." So I took the newspaper and stuck it in the bushes.

I asked Mr. Wigglesworth, "How do you get up in the morning?" He said, "I get up and dance before God for ten minutes every morning; I dance with all my heart. Then I take a shower, dress and go downstairs to read the Word of God."

You can tell the difference between a person who is soaked in the Word and a person who is not soaked in the Word. When a person stays in the Word and keeps going over it and over it and over it, he becomes saturated with the mind of God. I can tell you that if you never soak in the Word, you likely won't be ready when the Lord comes back. Ministers can bless you and bless you and bless you, but finally you've got to go to God and get His blessings for yourself!

11. The door was shut. You know, when God closes a door, no man can open it. The foolish virgins came to the door and knocked. But all they heard was a voice from the inside saying, "I'm sorry; the door is shut and you cannot come in." There was no second chance. They missed the greatest event of their lives. And the exclusion was final!

When the Lord Jesus gave this story, he was telling his disciples what the church in the world would be like in the last days. My friends, there is an hour when profession fails. A time is coming when our private and personal life will have all of its secrets revealed. Therefore, we must watch. And we must be ready. Prepare now!