

WE ARE ALMOST THERE!

WITH NO APOLOGIES, IT IS THE INTENT OF THIS BOOK TO WARN AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE ABUNDANT BIBLICAL EVIDENCE THAT THE END OF THE WORLD IS ALMOST HERE. THE END OF THE WORLD IS THAT AWESOME AND TERRIBLE MOMENT WHEN JESUS CHRIST, THE SUPREME RULER OF MANKIND, WILL COMPLETE THE JUDGMENT PROCESS THAT BEGAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN ADAM AND EVE DISOBEYED GOD.

HAROLD CAMPING / FAMILY RADIO

We Are Almost There!

By Harold Camping

Scripture texts are from the
King James Version of the Bible

Family Stations, Inc.
Oakland, California 94621

Internet: www.familyradio.com

First Edition Feb. 2008

01-02-09

We Are Almost There!

Table of Contents

Preface v

Chapter 1. The Glorious Word of God	1
God's Written Law	2
The Period of Revelation	3
Bible Interpretation	3
Finally, a Full Revealing of God's Salvation Plan	5
Chapter 2. The Bible Gives the Timeline of History	7
The Unfolding of God's Salvation Plan in the Timeline of History	8
Israel and the Years from 1447 B.C. to A.D. 33	9
The Beginning of the Church Age	11
The Bible Anticipates a Defective Church	12
The Problem of Satan Within the Churches	14
Is The Entire Bible the Infallible Word of God?	16
There Would Be an End of the Church Age	17
Chapter 3. God's Plan to Delay the Understanding of the End	19
Now We Are at the Time of Understanding	21
The Important Time Junctures Are Linked to Ceremonial Feast Days	26
The Precision of Important Salvation Events	29
God Used the Temple to Illustrate Spiritual Truth	30
The Temple Dedication Information Gives Important Time Information	31
The Eight Day, October 21, 2011	32
Another Look at the Feast of the Tabernacles	33
Chapter 4. We Begin Our Search for the Time table of the End	37
The Date of the End of the Church Age	44
Chapter 5. Is Our Understanding of the Timeline of History Accurate?	49
The 13,000th Anniversary of the World	52

One Day is a Thousand Years	56
The Final Five Months	58
More Incredible Information	59
Atonement to Rapture: 722,500 Days	60
More Proofs	61
God's Judgment Process Continues as a Great Multitude are Saved	62
Chapter 6. Is There Hope for Me?	64
Those Who Have Never Heard	65
Those Who Have Heard the Word but Are Scoffers	66
Those Who Humbly Believe the Bible is to be Obeyed	68

Preface

WITH NO APOLOGIES, IT IS THE INTENT OF THIS BOOK TO WARN AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE ABUNDANT BIBLICAL EVIDENCE THAT THE END OF THE WORLD IS ALMOST HERE. THE END OF THE WORLD IS THAT AWESOME AND TERRIBLE MOMENT WHEN JESUS CHRIST, THE SUPREME RULER OF MANKIND, WILL COMPLETE THE JUDGMENT PROCESS THAT BEGAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN ADAM AND EVE DISOBEYED GOD.

Each and every unsaved person will experience the full wrath of God. If Christ has not paid the penalty for your sins, you will experience the full wrath of God.

No one likes to talk about this kind of information. Nothing could be more demoralizing. It is far easier to live in complete denial, secretly hoping that all of this talk of judgment day is just talk and is not to be taken seriously.

However, when we know that the Bible is absolutely true and authoritative, we are commanded to tell the world all that the Bible teaches concerning that awesome event. The true believers in Christ have no option. They must warn the world of impending judgment. The prophet Jonah, for example, was commanded by God to go to Nineveh to warn that wicked city that in 40 days, God would destroy them. Jonah was not at all happy to take that terrible news to Nineveh, but, finally, he did obey. Wonderfully, the people of Nineveh repented and humbly pleaded with God, hoping that God would have mercy on them. And God did have mercy on them, and God did not destroy their city.

The situation is the same today, except the whole world is in view. The time is less than four years, rather than 40 days. While the whole city of Nineveh repented, the whole world of our day will not repent. However, the good news is that the Bible declares that a great multitude, which no man could number, will humbly plead with God for mercy, and a great harvest of people, whom God has chosen to save, will be given eternal life, and they will escape the judgment of God, which they deserve because of their sins.

A very common assertion is made, especially by those who are members of local churches, that Christ will come as a thief in the night. Thus, they contend that no one should be interested in attempting to learn from the Bible what God says about the timing of the end of the world.

These dear people are correct. The Bible does teach that for many people, Christ will come as a thief in the night. We read in I Thessalonians 5:2-3:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But then the Bible says in verses 4-6:

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

These verses are teaching that there are two kinds of people in the world who realize that this world will come to an end, at which time God will separate the saved from the unsaved. Both groups know that the unsaved will experience the full wrath of God, and that those who have become saved will be forever with Christ in the greatest happiness and glory.

One group includes many people who believe they are saved, but in reality, they are not saved. They are not aware that in our day, God has revealed, in the Bible, a great amount of information that relates to the timeline of history, all the way to the end of the world, and they do not care to try to learn all that the Bible teaches. They are confident that they have become saved, and therefore, it really makes no difference when Christ will come. For them, He will come as a thief in the night. But sadly, these verses teach that when Christ comes, “**sudden destruction**” will come upon them. By their lack of interest in wanting to know as much as possible about what the Bible teaches, they are demonstrating that they are not saved, and they are still subject to the awful wrath of God.

But there are also many people who, because of their love and respect for the Bible, have learned that the Bible gives much information about the timeline of history. Thus, they have learned a great many details concerning end-time events, as well as the timetable of these events. The Bible speaks of them as “**watchmen**” (Ezekiel 33:2-9), in that they are able to warn the unsaved of the world of the impending end of the world, which is so near.

This book was written so that hopefully, you, too, will realize the absolute seriousness of the predicament the world is in. There is no way to change the plan of God for the end of the world. However, it is possible that you, too, could be one of those who will escape the wrath of God through the mercy of His wonderful salvation.

In this book we will look briefly at God’s actions throughout the history of the world, as God unfolds His salvation plan to the world. We shall particularly focus on the final period of earth’s history, when two great events

simultaneously happening. These events are the completion of God's judgment process, and the saving of the great multitude of people, which no man could number.

In this book, many dates of various historical, as well as future events, are given. For those who wish to check additional Biblical evidence for these dates, and to ascertain detailed information concerning the events that identify with these dates, they are invited to call or write Family Stations for free books that show that all of the information has come from the Bible, and is not derived by speculation or guesswork of any kind. The books include the following titles.

Time Has An End

The End of the Church Age and After

Wheat and Tares

First Principles of Bible Study

I Hope God Will Save Me

Adam When?

The Perfect Harmony of the Numbers of the Hebrew Kings are

Chapter 1. The Glorious Word of God

Understanding the awesome idea that the world is very near the end of time requires a clear understanding of the nature and authority of God's Word, the Bible. The Bible sets forth fundamental principles that must be obeyed if we are to receive truth from God. These principles must be thoroughly imbedded in the minds of anyone who wishes to understand this awesome idea.

The Bible is God's Word. In the original languages of the Bible, mainly Hebrew and Greek, every word, and every letter of every word, is from the mouth of God. Therefore, the idea that any human being, or any church institution, has any authority over any word or phrase in the original languages of the Bible should never be tolerated. God has protected the most ancient copies of the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts so that we can be assured that we have the original Word of God, directly from His mouth. The manuscripts used in the King James English translation, and other translations of that era, are the manuscripts that God has preserved. True, the serious Bible teacher, when studying any teaching of the Bible, should always check the work of the translator and make any necessary corrections, if any are required.

The Bible in its entirety is God's supreme law book, and it is to be meticulously obeyed by each and every human being. As the law book of God, the Bible prescribes that the penalty of damnation is to be given to each and every person who violates the law of God in any manner (Romans 6:23; James 2:10).

The Bible is God's message of salvation. That is, included in God's law is the wonderful news that God Himself, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, became the substitute, or stand-in, who bore the penalty of God's wrath on behalf of all those whom God had chosen to become saved from the penalty of sin, which is eternal damnation.

The Bible is its own dictionary and commentary. Each and every word, sentence, concept, etc., is to be understood by examining the use of that same word or concept as it is found elsewhere in the Bible. No conclusion regarding any doctrine of the Bible should be accepted until it has been carefully checked throughout the whole Bible to verify that it altogether harmonizes with any and every other truth of the Bible. God commands in I Corinthians 2:13:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

God's Written Law

By God's mercy, God has provided a written copy of the law of God. That written law is the Bible, the Word of God. The law is also God's covenant with mankind, and it is referred to as the Gospel and as the Old and New Testaments. Thus, whether the Bible uses the words "law," or "commandments," or "testament," or "Gospel," or "covenant," or "Word," it is still speaking of the Bible alone. All of these words are synonyms.

The Bible was given to mankind in two distinct parts, but God wrote the Bible in such a way that the truths of the Bible have been revealed to mankind in three parts.

The first part of the written Word that God provided was the Old Testament. The writing of the Old Testament was begun in the year 1447 B.C. when God gave Israel the ten commandments together with many other laws. At the same time, within this covenant or law book, He wrote many truths concerning creation, the entrance of sin into the world, and the flood of Noah's day, as well as many commands that emphasized mankind's need for the Savior. God continued to write the Old Testament until the year 391 B.C.

However, God wrote the Old Testament in such a way that an enormous number of truths and information included in the writing of the Old Testament were only dimly revealed to mankind. Moreover, because the printing press was not invented until centuries after the Old Testament was written, actual copies of the first part of the Bible were almost nonexistent. Early on, very few copies of the first part of the Bible were available.

The second part of the covenant, which is called the New Testament, began to be written by God about A.D. 33. It was completed about A.D. 95. It provided a great amount of truth that helped to make the Old Testament somewhat more understandable. This is mainly because the New Testament gave much information about Jesus Christ the Savior, as He literally and actually experienced the wrath of God on behalf of all of those He planned to save. Nevertheless, the New Testament, like the Old Testament, was written by God in such a way that many truths set forth in it remained hidden from the true believers of the church age.*

Thus, even though the Bible has been a completed, written covenant or law book for almost 2,000 years, many very important truths sprinkled all through the Bible were never revealed to even the most dedicated, God-fearing theologian who was a child of God. These mysterious or hidden doctrines relate especially to a precise and accurate understanding of the timing and nature of

* We use the term "church age" to signify the time period when God used the churches to bring the Gospel.

God's salvation program, together with the momentous events that would occur during the final 23 years of the history of the world.

The Third Period of Revelation

However, in our day, when we are very close to the end of time, God, for the third time, is revealing much additional truth that has always been in the Bible, but it has remained a mystery throughout time. Thus, it is almost like God has given us an addition to the Old and New Testaments, but the Bible, of course, has not become enlarged. No new words have been actually added to it. The Bible we use today, in the languages in which the Bible was originally written, is exactly the same Bible that was completed about 1,900 years ago. It is simply that now, the full glory of the Gospel can be seen as God, in our day, has opened our understanding to most of the truths that previously had been hidden. In Hebrews 8:8, the Bible declares:

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

In this verse, the phrase “**I will make a new covenant**” should have been translated “**I will finish a new covenant.**” The new covenant is the New Testament of the Bible, but it is at the end of time, in our day, that God is finishing our understanding of that covenant by opening our eyes to so many new truths. They have always been in the Bible, but in our day, they are being revealed to us so that we can understand them. It is as if God is finishing the writing of the covenant, which is the Bible. This is in exact agreement with such a verse as Daniel 12:9:

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

Bible Interpretation

It is indeed sad that virtually each and every church throughout the world cannot understand many truths of the Bible. This is so because they do not obey the Bible's instructions concerning Bible interpretation. Moreover, there is a good possibility that most Bible teachers do not understand that every word in the original languages of the Bible is from the mouth of God, and therefore, is super-important as well as super-accurate.

The man-made, historical, grammatical hermeneutic method of Bible interpretation that is held by virtually every church, denomination, seminary, etc., is to be totally rejected. The true Biblical method of Bible interpretation is based on the fact that the Bible teaches that the Bible is a spiritual book written in an earthly way. Because it is written by God, every historical event, and every conversation, and every incident recorded in the Bible is absolutely true and trustworthy. However, because these literal, historical statements also must be understood spiritually, the true ultimate message that God is giving to mankind in the Bible will not be understood until the spiritual teaching of the verse being studied has been found.

Jesus spoke of this hermeneutic principal in Mark 4:33-34, where we read:

And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Jesus is the very essence of the Word of God. We read in John 1:14 that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Thus, the principle of seeking the spiritual meaning of each word and phrase recorded in the Bible applies to the whole Bible inasmuch as Christ is identified with the whole Bible. The Bible is the Word of God. Christ is the Word of God. And because the Bible is God's book, the Bible student must seek help from the Holy Spirit, God Himself. God alone can bring truth to our hearts (John 16:13). Any spiritual conclusion must be carefully tested by the Bible student to be certain that it is altogether harmonious with any and every other truth the Bible teaches.

The foregoing principle that Christ spoke in parables, and without a parable He did not speak, appears to be the chief means by which God assists the true believers to further understand the Bible. But it also appears to be the chief means by which God blinds those who come to the Bible with their own preconceived ideas. This principle is set forth in Mark 4:11-12, where God says:

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

For example, anyone who follows the man-made, grammatical, historical hermeneutic, which is utilized throughout the church world, will not be able to correctly understand many very important truths of the Bible. This includes the Bible's teachings concerning the end of the church age, and the fact

that the true believers can know much about the timetable and details of the end of the world.

Finally, a Full Revealing of God's Salvation Plan

There are three especially important areas of truth that are in view as God, in our day, opens our eyes to much new truth that throughout the church age was not well understood. These areas are as follows. (1) The nature and timing of God's salvation plan. (2) The end-time details, which include the timeline of history. (3) The nature and character of God's plan of judgment.

In this study, we will focus to a small degree on the nature of God's salvation plan. Secondly, we will intensively focus on the end-time details. The nature and character of God's plan of judgment will be provided in a following book.

In Hebrews 8:10-11, God instructs us:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

These verses are especially focusing on God's salvation plan. Throughout the church age, the dominant teaching of most Biblical churches was to tell the brothers and sisters of the congregations how they might be sure they are saved or how they might become saved. A careful analysis of the teachings of these denominations invariably shows that they include the requirement that some contribution be made by the individual seeking salvation. These contributions could include actions such as water baptism, public profession of faith, the act of accepting Christ, the partaking of the Eucharist or communion table, or praying a certain kind of prayer. In virtually every case, there was a definite violation of the law of God, which clearly stipulates that all the work of saving a person was done by Christ, long before that person was born.*

In Hebrews 8:10-11, quoted above, God emphasizes that once the full revelation of the Bible occurs, the teaching on salvation in the world will be altogether Biblical. Mankind will not be taught how they might become saved,

* You are invited to send for the free booklet *I Hope God Will Save Me* for much more information about this awesome subject.

but rather that salvation is entirely the work of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). God will saving a great multitude who actually may understand very little of the Bible.

We will attempt to set forth a simple outline of the Biblical teaching concerning the salvation of the great multitude, which no man could number, who are being saved in our day.

1. The Bible commands the true believers to send the Gospel into all the world. God has guided the development of worldwide communications, such as radio and Internet, to make possible the hearing of the Gospel by every person in the world.

2. In God's mysterious providence, many who know little or nothing about Bible truth will begin to realize the following.

- a. They are sinners who are on their way to some awful future in which they will be punished for their sins.
- b. The Bible they are hearing about, and to which they have begun to listen, must be from God, and therefore, they begin to try to obey its commands.
- c. They learn that judgment day is very near, but God is saving many people.
- d. They begin to realize they can and must cry to God for mercy, hoping that maybe God will save them.

This is the present situation in the world, as more and more people are being saved all over the world, entirely by God's action. When God saves an individual, He gives that person a brand new, eternal, resurrected soul. Therefore, they have an intense, ongoing desire to be obedient to the Bible. The tremendous increase in the number of people who are now becoming saved, as the Bible insists (Revelation 7:9-14), surely is related to the fact that God is now revealing a great many truths of the Bible, which previous generations had not known.

Chapter 2.

The Bible Gives the Timeline of History

By carefully studying the whole Bible, we have learned that the Bible is not only a law book that sets forth all the laws by which God governs all mankind, but it is also a book that is given to mankind so that they can know God's timeline of history. We read in Ecclesiastes 8:5-7:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man *is* great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

In these verses, the word "judgment" is a synonym for the word "law." Thus, it is teaching that by studying the Bible, the true believer not only learns God's laws, particularly as they relate to God's judgment process, but also, he learns much about God's timetable for the earth.

For that reason, the true believer can know much about the timetable of history, including many truths about the timing of the end of the world. For those who do not follow the Biblical method of Bible interpretation, however, Christ will come as a thief in the night. Instantly, their misery will be enormously compounded when they realize, too late, that the end of the world has come. No longer will there be mercy or grace or salvation for the unsaved. Thus, we read in I Thessalonians 5:2-6:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

And we read in Revelation 3:3:

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on

thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

In these verses, God is teaching us that those who read the Bible are divided in two kinds of people. There are those who are satisfied with their present understanding of their relationship with God. They know that someday the world will end, but their understanding is that the timetable of the last day is known only by God. Therefore, they think that mankind need not be concerned about it. For them, Christ indeed will come as a thief in the night. However, His coming for these individuals is for the purpose of destroying them. How awful!

On the other hand, there are those who have come to realize that God has given us much information in the Bible concerning the timetable of history. Therefore, they have learned, from the Bible, much about the timetable of the creation of the world and a great many other major events that are recorded in the Bible. They have also learned very much about the precise timetable of the end of the world. For them, the timing of the end of the world will not be unexpected.

The Unfolding of God's Salvation Plan is the Timeline of History

The Bible teaches how God has given the Gospel message to the human race throughout the timeline of history. The Gospel includes the whole Bible. Therefore, by carefully studying the Bible, we learn that the unfolding of God's salvation plan is the timeline of history.

For the first 9,500 years of the history of the world, God did not use any kind of earthly organization to represent the kingdom of God to this world. During that period of time, God always worked through individual believers who were representatives of His kingdom. Abel, Enoch, who was taken to heaven, Noah and his family, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are names that God recorded in the Bible as representatives of the kingdom of God.

As we carefully study the Bible, we discover that the world was created about 13,000 years ago.* The Bible is very precise, so when we harmonize the Biblical calendar with our modern calendar, we know that the year of creation was 11,013 B.C.

In all likelihood, during the first 9,500 years of earth's history, few individuals became saved. In Noah's day, for example, in the entire world that existed in the year 4990 B.C., when God destroyed the world with the flood, there were only eight people who were saved.

* You are invited to send to Family Radio for the free book *Adam When* that shows how the Bible provides this information.

Israel and the Years from 1447 B.C. to A.D. 33

However, in the year 1447 B.C., God made a great change in His method of having the kingdom of God represented on this earth. In that year, God began to utilize the nation of Israel to represent the kingdom of God. It was in the year 1447 B.C. that Israel, under the leadership of Moses, came out of their enslavement to Egypt. The nation of Israel consisted of the descendants of Abraham, who was born more than 700 years earlier. Abraham was born in the year 2167 B.C. as a citizen of Ur of the Chaldees or Babylon. In the year 2092 B.C., he and his wife, Sarah, in obedience to God's command, went to the land of Canaan. They became the beginning of the nation of Israel, and the land of Canaan was used of God as an earthly representation of the kingdom of God.

The nation of Israel, together with the land of Canaan, became the centerpiece of the unfolding of God's salvation plan during the 2,100-year period preceding the birth of Christ. The fact is that Jesus the Son of God received His human nature as a direct descendant of Abraham.

By the year 1447 B.C., the descendants of Abraham, who were called Israel, had grown to become a nation of possibly about two million people. It was in that year that they came out of enslavement to Egypt. And for the next 1,480 years, Israel was called God's people. They were given more and more of God's laws. They became the external representatives of the kingdom of God on earth.

God gave the nation of Israel a country, the land of Canaan, which is also called the land of Israel, as a place to live, and a temple, and synagogues in which to worship. He gave them laws, which theologically, we call ceremonial laws, which were to be observed because these laws pointed the Israelites to the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. The ceremonial laws included things such as the observance of feast days, new moons, seventh-day sabbaths, burnt offerings, blood sacrifices, etc.

God used earthly entities such as Canaan, Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, Zion, the temple, Judea, etc., to externally represent the kingdom of God. Thus, these same words are very frequently used in the Bible to spiritually represent the kingdom of God. For example, during the church age, the churches were the external representation of the kingdom of God. Therefore, the Bible frequently uses words such as Israel, Judah, the temple, etc., in speaking about the churches of the church age.

An integral part of the nation of Israel was the body of laws that God gave concerning the appointment of priests, Levites, prophets, and kings to rule over the whole nation. It was a divine organism established by God Himself to externally represent the kingdom of God here on earth. Every Jew who was a descendant of Abraham was automatically a member of this great congregation. To emphasize this membership, every male was circumcised, which was another one of the ceremonial laws set forth by the law of God.

The Bible gives us a lot of information about the years that immediately precede the beginning of the nation of Israel as well as its first thousand years of history. The Bible gives much detail about Israel, as a nation, when God delivered them from slavery and brought them out of Egypt, when they miraculously went through the Red Sea on dry ground, and wandered 40 years in the wilderness, and then went through the Jordan River on dry ground. The Bible then gives considerable information concerning the next 360 years of their history, as God ruled over them, utilizing individuals called judges, in the land of Canaan.

We are then given details about the next 116 years, when Israel came into its greatest earthly glory, as they were ruled over by King Saul, who was followed by King David, and then by King Solomon.

Considerable detail is also given in the Bible concerning the division of the one unified nation, which included the 12 tribes of Israel, into two nations. Upon the death of King Solomon, ten of the tribes became an independent kingdom called Israel, with its capital eventually located in Samaria, and the remaining two tribes became the nation of Judah, with its capital located in Jerusalem. The Bible gives much information concerning these kingdoms and the kings who ruled over them.

The Bible also gives considerable information about the end of these nations. The ten tribes of the nation of Israel were conquered by the Assyrians in the year 709 B.C. Then in the year 587 B.C., the nation of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians, at which time the city of Jerusalem and the magnificent temple built by King Solomon were destroyed.

However, following the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., details of the experiences of the 12 tribes became much more limited. We learn that in 539 B.C., about 40,000 of the survivors of Judah, which was destroyed by the Babylonians, returned to Jerusalem. We learn a few facts about the rebuilding of the temple, an effort that was completed in 515 B.C. We learn about a few experiences of the Jews who returned to the land of Israel, mainly from the books in the Bible titled Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

But then for almost 400 years of history, from 391 B.C. to 8 B.C., the Bible is completely silent about the land of Israel, its inhabitants, and for that matter, any other nation in the world.

Sadly, during the entire period of Israel's existence, very few people actually became saved. The Bible is filled with statements concerning the sin, the apostasy, and the rebellion of the nation of Israel against the laws of God. Even when Jesus Christ came as the Savior, who in His human nature was a descendant of Abraham, they rebelled, and they would not regard Him as their Messiah. In fact, they eventually killed Him (Acts 2:22-23).

The Bible assures us that it is Christ who is the wonderful fruit produced by the nation of Israel. It is through the nation of Israel that God took on a human nature, being born of the virgin Mary, who was of the tribe of Judah.

In 8 B.C., again the Bible began to give us much detail about the Jewish nation. In that year, the birth of John the Baptist was announced, and it was John who was to declare to the world that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, had come to take away the sins of the world. Jesus Christ, of course, is the only means by which anyone in the world can have the penalty for their sins paid, and thus be eternally reconciled to God.

From the time of the birth of Jesus in 7 B.C. until about A.D. 65, the Bible gives much information about the nation of Israel. It is during this period of time that the most awesome event in the history of the world occurred. God, the Lord Jesus Christ, took on a human nature by being born of the virgin Mary. During this period of time, Jesus preached for about three and a half years. Jesus Christ was crucified in A.D. 33. He arose from the dead and ascended back into heaven. That year, A.D. 33, marked the end of the 1,480-year period during which the whole nation of Israel was the congregation that externally represented the kingdom of God.*

The Beginning of the Church Age

A few days after Christ's ascension into heaven, the great divine organization that was to represent the kingdom of God for the next 1,955 years had its beginning.

On Pentecost day in A.D. 33, about 3,000 people were saved (Acts 2). Those who were saved that day came from many different nations. This grand event marked the beginning of the church age. It was during this part of the beginning of the church age that much detail is given concerning missionaries being sent into countries that we now know as Turkey, Greece, and Italy. The church age was set forth by God as a divine plan by which God would send the Gospel into the entire world. Never again would the Jewish synagogues, the city of Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, or the temple in Jerusalem externally represent the kingdom of God. The local congregations that would be formed throughout the world would externally represent the kingdom of God. Therefore, spiritually, the Bible very frequently calls the local congregations "Jerusalem," "the temple," "Zion," "Israel," "Judah," "Judea," etc.

This divine organization, which eventually consisted of churches located all over the world, was carefully designed by God. And God placed strict rules in His law book, the Bible, that governed the selection of elders and deacons (I Timothy 3). Women were not to teach or have authority in the congregations. The Old Testament ceremonial laws, which were to be observed by the nation of Israel, were no longer to be observed. Instead, two new

* You are invited to send for the free books *The End of the Church Age and After* and *Wheat and Tares* for more information about the end of the church age.

ceremonial laws were introduced to assist in teaching the nature of the Gospel. These were water baptism and the Lord's Supper. A law concerning excommunication from church membership was set forth (I Corinthians 5). Sunday was appointed by God as the Sunday Sabbath day, which was to be used for all kinds of spiritual activity. Each local congregation that would be established throughout the world was to be governed by the laws set forth in the Bible.

The great task given to these God-ordained congregations was to send the Gospel throughout the whole world. So, already, as we have noted, before the Bible was even finished, missionaries were being sent forth into neighboring nations (Acts 13).

About A.D. 95, God completed the writing of the Bible, and no further information has come from God describing the actual progress of the church in the world as an historical account. However, long before the church age began, God prophesied how the church age would spiritually develop.

One would expect that with the auspicious beginning of the church age on Pentecost in A.D. 33, when about 3,000 were saved in one day (Acts 2), that the development of the church age would be a notable success story. However, the Bible prophesied that this was not God's plan. We sadly learn from the Bible that even before God finished writing the Bible (about A.D. 95), already there was mounting evidence that the church age was not going to be a huge success story.

The Bible Anticipates a Defective Church

In Revelation 2 and Revelation 3, God tells us about the spiritual condition of seven typical churches. These conditions existed about 30 years after these churches had been formed. For example, the church at Ephesus had lost its first love (Revelation 2:4-5). Remember, to love God is to obey His commandments (John 14:21-23). Therefore, God threatened to remove their candlestick, which represents the light of the Gospel, because they were no longer obedient to God's laws. This church would no longer be used by God to send the Gospel into the world.

In Galatians 1:2-9, the Bible reports that already, before the Bible was completed, the churches of Galatia had begun to follow a gospel that was not the Gospel of the Bible. In Revelation 2:13, the Bible reports that the church at Pergamos was already a church in which, to some extent, Satan was ruling. This verse makes reference to Satan's "seat." In the Bible, the word "seat," in this kind of context, refers to ruling or reigning. And in Revelation 3:1-4, the Bible reports that the church at Sardis was already a dead church, even though it had a few true believers left within it.

In Matthew 13:24-30, the Bible records the parable of the wheat and the tares. The wheat represented true believers in the churches. The tares

represented unbelievers who gave every evidence of being true believers, so much so that only at the end of the church age would God provide the means by which the wheat could be separated from the tares. This meant that all through the church age, there would be tares, those who were still slaves of Satan, who would be very active in the churches. Thus, through them, Satan could rule in the churches even though officially, Christ was the ruler of the churches.

Already in Isaiah 9:1-4, God prophesied that the church age would not be a great success story. There we read:

Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her* by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, *and not increased the joy*: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, *and as men* rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

In these verses, God speaks of the light shining on the land beyond Jordan as “Galilee of the nations” (see also Matthew 4:15-16). That is, all the nations of the world were to be under the light of the Gospel. That light, of course, is the Lord Jesus, who is the light of the world (John 1:7-10).

Because the light of the Gospel was to shine throughout the world, a great change in God’s Gospel program would occur in that the spiritual darkness of the world would be penetrated by this light (Isaiah 9:2). It would be a light that would bring into existence, throughout the world, a great company of people who would externally appear to have become true believers in Christ, as Isaiah 9:3 declares, “**Thou hast multiplied the nation.**” In other words, the external size of the kingdom of God that would be developed all over the world would be great.

However, in the same verse, God prophesies that He has not increased the joy of harvest. The joy of harvest is the joy that comes when a person has been given eternal life so that he has become a true believer (Luke 15:10). If the joy of harvest is lacking, it can only mean that the harvest of true believers is very small. The fact is, as we are noting, this sad anticipation of the lack of a great harvest of people being saved and coming into the kingdom of God is prophesied in many places in the Bible.

In addition to all the Biblical references we have already noted, we read in Isaiah 5 that God portrays the church age as a vineyard that has been carefully

and lovingly planted by God Himself. But this vineyard did not produce good fruit. It produced wild grapes. Spiritually, wild grapes identify with those who have designed their own gospel instead of meticulously following the Gospel of the Bible. Later on in this study, we will see that it was God's plan that because of this wickedness, God eventually would destroy the vineyard.

It should be noted that in many chapters of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, etc., God indicates His intense anger against the nations of Israel and Judah because of their continuous wickedness. Indeed, finally, they were destroyed. Israel was destroyed in 709 B.C. by the Assyrians, and Judah in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians.

God used Israel and Judah, which in their day externally represented the kingdom of God, as examples of all the local churches that have externally represented the kingdom of God throughout the time of the church age. As we study these Old Testament books of the Bible, we are actually reading what God has anticipated for the church age, and more particularly, for the end of the church age.

Thus, God is teaching that churches were to be established all over the world throughout the church age, giving the appearance that the church age was enormously successful. But in reality, only a remnant, a small part of the whole in the churches, would actually become saved, that is, actually become true believers.

This same thought is set forth in Romans 9:27, where God quotes from Isaiah 10:22-23.

Romans 9:27: Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

Isaiah 10:22-23: For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

The Problem of Satan within the Churches

One very big reason for the lack of spiritual success in the church age was the problem of Satan. At the time of the cross, Satan was given a death blow. He was banished from heaven (Revelation 12:7-11), and he was bound so that he could not deceive the nations during the complete period of the church age, which was symbolically described as a period of 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-3). The 1,000 years must be understood as a symbolical or spiritual number

that signifies “completeness.” The actual period he was bound was 1,955 years (from A.D. 33 to 1988).

The binding of Satan meant that he could not in any way frustrate God’s plan to save those whom God, at the very beginning of time, had elected to salvation. But the fact that Satan was bound did not preclude him from going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour (I Peter 5:8). That is, while the church age was altogether God’s plan by which the Gospel was to reach into all the world, it would be greatly hindered in its spiritual effectiveness by Satan. He would hinder the effectiveness of the churches by sowing tares or weeds within them (Matthew 13:24-30). That is, Satan, operating as an “**angel of light**” would bring his ministers as “**ministers of righteousness**” into each local congregation (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

In Revelation 6:4, Satan is pictured as a rider on a red horse carrying a great sword, which is the Sword of the Spirit, the Bible, by which he would take peace from the earth. In other words, he would use words from the Bible to try to give authority to his false teachings.

When we carefully harmonize all these Biblical references, we learn that, indeed, from an outward standpoint, the church age was very successful, as church after church reported that great numbers of people were saved. In reality, however, only a remnant of those who became confessing members in full communion in the church actually became true believers.

The greatest blessing to the world during the church age was probably the printing and distribution of hundreds of millions of Bibles throughout the world. The Bible, the light of the Gospel, was sent around the world, even though the number of those who became true believers during the church age was small.

Thus, the ominous prophecy of Matthew 7:21-23 will come into sharp reality in the day God brings His great wrath upon the unsaved of the world. And sadly, that includes all those who are still in any church anywhere in the world when the rapture occurs, that is, when the true believers are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. In these verses God declares:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

From our superior vantage point of being able to look back on the whole church age, we can see the reality of God’s prophetic statement concerning the

lack of success of the church age. True, it began with a great flourish in A.D. 33, on the day of Pentecost when about 3,000 people were saved. But as we have already noted, within the churches that were established even before the Bible was completed, apostasy was already in evidence. Likewise, Satan was already ruling in many churches by seeding those churches with tares. The churches in Revelation 2 and 3 were representative of all the churches that would come into existence throughout the New Testament church age.

Moreover, when we examine church history, we never learn of a time of great faithfulness to the Bible. Church history is replete with accounts of Biblical unfaithfulness. The high watermark of Biblical unfaithfulness was probably the time of the Reformation, which occurred in Europe about four to five hundred years ago. At that time in history, the dominant church was the Roman Catholic church. It was so bad in its violation of Biblical laws that Roman Catholic men like Martin Luther and John Calvin left the church and became the fountainhead of the Protestant churches. Many of these Protestant churches earnestly tried to be as faithful as possible to the teachings of the Bible.

However, it was not long until a great many of the Protestant churches were teaching a man-made salvation plan whereby anyone can accept Christ as his Lord and Savior and that this action produced salvation. A look at the great revivals of the past discloses that the basis of most of them was that kind of gospel. Sadly, it was not the Gospel of the Bible. In spite of this, God did save some people during the church age.

Is the Entire Bible the Infallible Word of God?

The very fact that amongst the many Protestant denominations that were developed there is great disagreement concerning many aspects of Bible doctrine indicates that each denomination selected the verses from the Bible that they especially liked, and then they developed their creeds and confessions from these verses. Each denomination insisted that the verses they had selected were infallible and inerrant. Thus, it appeared that the theological conclusions that became their church creeds, and which were derived by harmonizing their understanding of the verses they had chosen, were altogether true and trustworthy. Their teachings appeared to be solidly grounded in the infallible Word of God, the Bible.

But that which appeared to be true and trustworthy was not always true and trustworthy.

Unfortunately, very frequently, the verses they had chosen as a basis for their confessions were wrongly understood because the whole Bible was not consulted by these church theologians. They did not carefully search the whole Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, to make certain their conclusions

were correct. It appeared that they believed that the entire Bible was infallible, but in actuality, they placed their trust only in those verses they had chosen to prove their doctrines. Thus, effectively, they denied the authority of each and every verse in the entire Bible.

The consequence of this faulty trust in the Bible was the sending forth of a gospel of salvation that was at times far from truth. That is why throughout the church age there have been many different understandings of Bible doctrines by various denominations. For example, the Baptists disagree with the Lutherans, the Lutherans with the Presbyterians, the Presbyterians with the Baptists, etc., concerning many Bible teachings.

We know the Bible is true and trustworthy in connection with each and every Biblical doctrine, and therefore, there can be only one true answer. Thus, if several views concerning a particular doctrine were held by different denominations, at most only one of these denominations was speaking the truth, and all the others were preaching a lie.

On the other hand, if these denominations believed that the entire Bible is God's infallible Word, and their creeds must be under the authority of the Bible alone and in its entirety, then one could logically expect that eventually, all denominations would teach each doctrine in the same way that every other church taught that doctrine.

In addition, there have been large segments of the churches, like the Roman Catholics, the Mormons, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Charismatic churches of our day who openly declare that their church doctrines are a product of both the Bible and later revelations from God, messages that were given after the Bible was completed. Therefore, by their very declaration, they have an authority that structures and determines their understanding of the Bible that is different from God's authority, which is the Bible alone and in its entirety (Revelation 22:18-19). We must absolutely understand that there could never have been any addition to the Bible once it was completed about 1,900 years ago.

As we indicated earlier, God anticipated and prophesied that for all of the above reasons, the prophecy would come to pass as God declared, **“Thou hast... not... joy in harvest”** (Isaiah 9:3). Although Israel, that is, all the local churches throughout the world, would be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant would be saved (Romans 9:27).

There Would Be an End of the Church Age

God prophesied that finally, there would be an end to the church age, and then God would complete the harvest of His elect, those who were chosen by God to become saved (Ephesians 1:3-6), by bringing the Gospel to individuals who were outside of any church authority.

When we search the Bible, we find that the Bible teaches that there will be a final tribulation, which in Matthew 24:21 is called “great tribulation.” We read there:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Significantly, we live at a time in history when we can look back on almost 2,000 years of history that came after the Bible was completed. As we learned earlier in this study, the available historical information from non-Biblical sources concerning the history of the churches teaches us that the church age was as unsuccessful as the Bible predicted it would be.

But that brings us to a very big question. It has always been understood by Bible students that finally, there would be an end to this world, at which time the unsaved would receive the full penalty of God’s wrath, and the saved would be eternally secure with Christ in the new heavens and the new earth. Further, it has been commonly believed that the end of the world would come when Christ would come as a thief in the night. That is, it was understood that we cannot know with any precision the time of the end. This was so even though at various times in history, when severe persecution of Christians was particularly in evidence in some parts of the world, there were those who dared to speculate that they knew the year of Christ’s return. Of course, in every instance, they were proven wrong. This was so because they did not base their conclusion upon a careful analysis of everything the Bible has to say about the return of Christ.

In fact, throughout the church age it appears that the normal understanding of the churches was that the churches would continue to the very end of time, and suddenly, this world would come to its end as Christ came as a thief in the night.

A major variation of this concept became popular during the last century when the so-called premillennial doctrine was taught, especially in the Baptist churches. That doctrine declared that Christ would come as a thief in the night and rapture the church, that is, take all the people in the churches to heaven. At the same time or shortly before that, there would be a seven-year period of great tribulation. Immediately following this seven-year period, Christ would physically return to the present earth to reign 1,000 years from the present literal city of Jerusalem. After this 1,000-year period, the end of the world would come. This kind of teaching, which is altogether inaccurate, is possible because there are many chapters, especially in the Book of Revelation, that obviously speak of the end of the world but which are extremely difficult to understand. It is only in our day that we can begin to clearly understand these Biblical references to the end of time.

Chapter 3.

God's Plan to Delay the Understanding of the End

Indeed, the Bible instructs us that it would not be possible to understand any information in the Bible that gives details of the end of the world until the world would actually be very close to its end. For example, many verses in the Book of Daniel speak about the end of the world, but God instructs in Daniel 12:9:

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

In other words, not until we came to the time when we were very near to the end of the world would the true believers understand any substantial information concerning the end-time details of the Gospel in the world. It was God's intention that just before the world came to its end, then that kind of information would become available to true believers who in turn were to make it available to the world.

One method God has employed to keep the end-time information from being understood is to allow virtually all of the churches to adopt a man-made hermeneutic, that is, a man-made method of Bible interpretation, which made a great amount of Biblical information inaccessible to the minds of the theologians. Remember we took note of this sad fact earlier in this study.

The Bible clearly instructs us that without a parable, Christ did not speak (Mark 4:34). A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly or spiritual meaning. That is, the Bible is altogether a spiritual book. It is the Word of God, and Christ is the very essence of the Word of God (John 1:14). Because it is written by God, all of the historical information, the conversations that are recorded, and the anecdotes that are noted, are absolutely true and trustworthy. But knowing that this historical event actually happened is only a fraction of the immense storehouse of truth that the Bible actually is. Each conversation, each anecdote, each word of the Bible was carefully planned and designed by God to teach exceedingly important spiritual truths.

To find spiritual truth requires an immense amount of Bible study, comparing Scripture with Scripture (I Corinthians 2:13). It also requires God the Holy Spirit to open the spiritual eyes of the truth seeker. As already noted, it was not God's intention to reveal many truths of the Bible, that is, to open the spiritual eyes of the truth seeker, until very near the end of time. To facilitate this blindness throughout the church age, God had not seen fit to open the spiritual eyes of the Bible teachers of the churches that are located all around the world.

Thus, for example, they do not realize that they are studying the Bible with an altogether wrong method of Bible interpretation.

Another example can be offered as to how, throughout the church age, God kept the churches from understanding a great many statements of the Bible. Those whose spiritual eyes God has opened implicitly understand that each and every word in the original languages of the Bible is from the mouth of God, and therefore, is absolutely true and trustworthy. The translator may have made an error in translation, but the Hebrew or Greek word that is being translated is never to be questioned.

The problem of questioning the original Hebrew or Greek has been especially troublesome in connection with the numbers of the Bible. For example, theologians have been unable to reconcile the duration of a certain king's reign as recorded in one verse in the Bible with the information given in another place in the Bible. Thus, they have frequently concluded that there must have been a scribal error, that is, at some time, when copying the original writing of the Bible, a scribe accidentally slightly changed a letter from the letters of the original number, and thus made it a number that is not in the original writing, and that error continued as additional copies were made. Consequently, they say that we cannot absolutely trust each and every number recorded in the Bible.

That kind of attitude toward the Bible means that we really cannot trust any of the Bible. If that kind of error is possible with a number that is recorded in the Bible, then it could have also possibly occurred in connection with any word in the Bible, and we would have to conclude that none of the Bible is absolutely trustworthy.

However, in order to give authority to the verses they are using to teach what they want to teach, Bible teachers declare that the Bible is infallible and without error. But they actually do not believe that this is really true of each and every word in the whole Bible. If they did believe the whole Bible was infallible, they would never speak of such things as scribal error. They do not understand that God has protected His Word so that a scribal error could not occur. Because Christ deliberately spoke in parables to hide truths, and because God has allowed church theologians to question the accuracy of some words in the Bible, many truths recorded in the Bible have remained hidden.

These are just two examples, amongst a number of other ways, of how God has kept certain truths of the Bible hidden until He chooses to reveal these truths. We must realize that no individual can ever claim that it was his own intellectual ability or his holiness or righteousness that enabled him to properly understand the Bible. We must realize that only God can open our eyes to the truths that God has hidden in the Bible. And without question, He has His own timetable to do this.

We must keep in mind that God finished writing the Bible almost 2,000 years ago. But it was God's plan that a great many truths of the Bible were not

to be understood by anyone until very near the end of time. And yet, for almost 2,000 years, earnest, devoted, faithful Bible scholars, who were truly saved, have had access to the Bible, and they have tried very hard to understand as much of the Bible as possible.

Thus, we can begin to see why God wrote the Bible in the very complex, complicated way that He did. We understand, for example, why God allowed all the churches to adopt a very faulty method of Bible interpretation. It is only because we are near the end of time, and it is now God's stated intention to give us all this additional truth, that we are able to understand so much more Bible truth than earlier Bible students.

Now We Are at the Time of Understanding

Now, we have arrived at that time. Consequently, verses in the Bible which heretofore have been mysterious are now being understood. Almost every day new truth is pouring from the Bible. This is resulting in an increasingly greater understanding of God's plan for the end of the world. By following the Biblical principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture, and realizing that we must seek the spiritual truth hidden within each illustration and each anecdote and each historical event recorded in the Bible, God is opening our eyes to understand all kinds of truth that heretofore has been denied the most earnest seeker of Biblical truth. We are now able to discover the Biblical pattern for the closing events of the world. This ability to know much more Biblical truth has come only because it is in this time of history that God is opening the eyes of true believers who are carefully searching the whole Bible for truth.

We must be reminded by the Bible that it was God's intention that this kind of information would someday be understood by the true believers. Remember God's declaration of Ecclesiastes 8:5-7:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

In these verses, God is teaching us that man, by nature, has no idea of the timetable of the day of his death or the details of God's judgment process for the end of the world. However, in the life of the true believer, the individual with a wise man's heart, it is God's purpose that he will know time and judgment.

The fact is that the true believers will know a great amount of time information, from the Bible, but the true believers have become aware of this

truth only in our day. Thus, for example, it is in our day that true believers have discovered from the Bible the entire calendar of history, beginning with creation in the year 11,013 B.C.

The principal set forth in Ecclesiastes 8 is further declared in I Thessalonians 5:2-6, where we read:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

These verses teach that for those who are satisfied with their present knowledge of the Bible, or their present philosophy of life, which includes the idea that they need not fear judgment day, for them, Christ will come as a thief in the night. They have no knowledge of or trust in the time information the Bible gives.

On the other hand, those who are watching and are sober, that is, have a sound mind because God has given them a new resurrected soul, they will know much about the character and timing of Christ's return.

This principle is further set forth in the language of Amos 3:7, where God says:

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

With these principles in mind, we know that we are enabled to anticipate the closing events of the world's history. Of course, these truths, which we believe relate to the end of the world, must not only come from the Bible, but also, they must stand the most careful scrutiny of the Bible.

The Bible clearly tells us that Christ will come as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:2). Throughout the church age, the churches have taught this. Based upon their best efforts to understand the Bible, God-fearing Bible teachers and theologians have correctly insisted that we must be deeply concerned about our personal salvation because we have no guarantee that we will be alive tomorrow. Moreover, most churches taught that we must also realize that the end of the world and the return of Christ in judgment could occur at any time.

However, as we have already indicated, throughout the church age, there was no clear knowledge of the Biblical timeline of history. No one had

been able to determine the precise year of creation, the year of the flood of Noah's day, the year Abraham was circumcised, the day and the year of Christ's baptism, etc.

This lack of accurate knowledge of the timing of past events, as well as any knowledge of the timing of Christ's return, was carefully planned by God. This is indicated in Daniel 12, where we read that Daniel, who had been given an understanding of much end-time information, was told to "**shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end**" (Daniel 12:4).

But now we are at the time of the end, and God has opened our spiritual eyes to the importance of statements such as those recorded in Ecclesiastes 8:5-6 and in Amos 3:7.

Therefore, as we have previously noted, the Bible teaches us in I Thessalonians 5:2-6 that many people in our day will continue to insist that Christ will come as a thief in the night, only to find that they are the objects of God's wrath.

Because we are now very near the time of the end, these verses are extremely significant. In our day we have been able, by God's mercy, to unfold the timeline of history by careful study of the Bible. Not only has the Bible disclosed to us much information concerned with the precise timetable of past historical events recorded in the Bible, but it has also given us much time information concerned with the events that must occur at the very end of the world.

We should not be surprised that this is so. When God destroyed the whole earth in Noah's day, He made sure that the world of that day knew that this terrible event, the destruction of the world by a huge flood, was coming, and also, the exact day it would occur. Noah was not only the builder of the huge ark, the building of which would have been well known to the world of that day, but Noah himself was "**a preacher of righteousness**" (II Peter 2:5). Seven days before the flood began, God gave Noah the precise date when the flood would begin (Genesis 7:4, 10, 16).

Likewise, when God was about to destroy the wicked city of Nineveh, God sent the prophet Jonah to warn the city that in 40 days, after Jonah began to warn the city, the city would be destroyed (Jonah 3:4).

Likewise, we must understand that today, God is giving information concerning the exact timetable of the end of the world. This information must come only from the Bible. The Bible today is no different in any way from the Bible that was completed more than 1,900 years ago. But because it was not God's plan to reveal this information until the end of time, this information concerning details of the time of the end of the world was deeply hidden in the words of the Bible. Therefore, it was not possible for even the most faithful, diligent Bible students to understand this.

Nevertheless, it has always been God's plan that near the time of the end, this extensive time information must become available to the world. Since all of the Biblical evidence shows that presently, we are almost to the end of time, we can be assured that this important time information should now be available, and indeed, must be shared with the whole world.

By carefully examining all of the information the Bible gives concerning the historical events recorded in the Bible, we are enabled to understand very much about the timing and nature of future events, all the way to the last day of the earth's existence. We can outline a number of fundamental truths that the Bible teaches us, and they are as follows.

1. The Bible is a very analytical book. It is not written in such a way as to encourage subjective analysis or philosophical reasoning (II Peter 1:20). It is written like an engineering book, wherein truth is presented as absolute fact.

2. Each and every number recorded in the Bible is accurate. Even though a number may be difficult to understand, it must never be regarded as an error.

3. There is great precision in the occurrence of historical events. For example, Israel was in Egypt for 430 years, to the very day. Israel was in the wilderness traveling from Egypt to Canaan for 40 years, to the very day.

4. Frequently, but not always, God uses certain numbers of the Bible to illustrate spiritual truth. Jesus Christ alludes to the spiritual significance of numbers in Matthew 18:21-22. When Peter asked Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother, Jesus used numbers to explain His answer. He says in verse 22:

... I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Since we are to always forgive each other, we can see that Jesus is using numbers to portray spiritual truths. These numbers could stand alone or be part of a larger number. This greatly assists in harmonizing and linking together parallel events that occur many years apart. The following is a list of most of these numbers.

- 2 - Those who have been commissioned to bring the Gospel
- 3 - God's purpose
- 4 - The farthest extent in time or in distance that God spiritually has in view

- 5- The atonement, which emphasizes both judgment and salvation
- 7- The perfect fulfillment of God's purpose
- 10- The completeness of whatever is in view
- 11- The first coming of Christ, 11,000 years after creation
- 12- The fullness of whatever is in view
- 13- The end of the world, the details of which began exactly 13,000 years after creation
- 17- Heaven
- 23- God's wrath or judgment
- 37- God's wrath or judgment
- 40- Testing
- 43- God's wrath or judgment

An example of how we can discover spiritual truth by means of a large number that can be broken down into smaller numbers is given in John 21. There the Bible records the catching of 153 fish. The net did not break. The fish were all safely brought to land, which represents heaven, without the use of a ship, which typifies the local church. Spiritually, these fish represent all the true believers, the elect, who will be saved from hell, which is typified by the sea, after the church age is finished. The number 153 is divisible, which we see by the numbers $3 \times 3 \times 17 = 153$. Spiritually, the numbers signify that the number 153 describes God's purpose (3) to bring to heaven (17) all those whom God has saved from the wrath of God. Thus, the number 153 assists us in seeing the spiritual truths that are hidden in this historical event.

5. At times the Bible calls attention to a number that is prophesying a future event. For example, in Daniel 12:12, God speaks of a blessed person who waits and comes to 1,335 days. We discover that this is prophesying the coming of Jesus, whose spiritual atoning work for this earth began on September 26, A.D. 29, when He was officially announced as the Lamb of God. It went on until May 22, A.D. 33, the Pentecost day when the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church age officially began. The time between these two events was exactly 1,335 days inclusive, as Daniel 12:12 had predicted.

6. It must be clearly understood that the true understanding of any Biblical truth can come only when the Holy Spirit decides it is time for us to know that truth. God must open our hearts and spiritual eyes before any truth can be known. Therefore, a plea for this spiritual sight should be the constant prayer of anyone who seeks to know any truth of the Bible. This also applies very directly to an understanding of the timing and nature of the closing events of this world's history.

7. In Colossians 2:16 and 17, God informs us that the ceremonial feast days are shadows of things to come. These verses declare:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Therefore, we can expect and do find that every important juncture in the unfolding of God's Gospel plan occurs on the date of a ceremonial feast day. For example, Christ was crucified on the day the Passover was to be observed. The day of Pentecost was the day the Holy Spirit was poured out at the beginning of the church age. We will find that this principle follows through all the way to the last day of the earth's existence, which comes on a day that identifies with the last day of the feast of tabernacles.

In our study of the Bible, if we keep these seven principles in mind, we will be greatly helped in our effort to learn truth from the Bible.

Because of the importance of point 7, which speaks of the relationship of the Biblical ceremonial dates to the important junctures in the unfolding of God's timeline of history, it would be well to further emphasize this issue. In so doing, we will also discover the great precision that frequently exists between these historical junctures. We will later discover that this precision continues to the very last day of the world's existence.

The Important Time Junctures Are Linked to Ceremonial Feast Days

As previously noted, many of the important junctures in the unfolding of time were tied very precisely to the ceremonial feast days that were to be observed by Old Testament Israel. The Biblical ceremonial calendar was governed by the elapsed time from one new moon to the next, which made the Biblical month either 29 or 30 days. By carefully analyzing the time information in the Bible, we learn that the first month of each year began as close to the spring vernal equinox as possible, but no earlier than 14 days before the spring equinox, which is March 21 or March 22.

As we have noted, God instituted a number of very important ceremonial feasts that were identified with important aspects of God's salvation program. They were a "**shadow of things to come.**" These important ceremonial feast days are as follows.

1. The Passover, the 14th day of the first month.

2. Pentecost, also called the feast of harvest, 50 days after the seventh-day Sabbath that was simultaneous with Passover day or was the first Sabbath day after the Passover.

3. The first day of the seventh month was a special feast day that theologians call the feast of trumpets. More properly, it should be called the feast of jubilee. The trumpets that were sounded on that day were not the Biblical silver trumpets. On that date, it was the “*shophar*,” the ram’s horn, that was blown. The Bible, when correctly translated, speaks of it as the day of jubilee (Numbers 29:1) or a memorial of the jubilee (Leviticus 23:24).

4. Every fiftieth year was a jubilee year, which emphasized that the Gospel (liberty) was to be proclaimed to the whole world. The jubilee years began in 1407 B.C. when Israel entered the land of Canaan and were to be observed at 50 year intervals thereafter (Leviticus 25:8-13). Thus, 7 B.C., the year Christ was born, was a jubilee year. And A.D. 1994, which came 2,000 years after 7 B.C., was also a jubilee year.

5. The tenth day of the seventh month was called the day of atonement. It, too, was called a day of jubilee (Leviticus 25:9), and it was looking toward the great event of Jesus providing atonement for the sins of all He came to save.

6. The 15th day to the 22nd day of the seventh month was the feast of tabernacles, which was at the same time as the feast of ingathering.

Significantly, the timing of each of these feast days identified with very important junctures in the unfolding of God’s salvation program. When we harmonize all of the Biblical information that helps us develop the timeline of history all the way to the end of time, we discover the following.

1. Considerable evidence in the Bible points to the fact that, in all likelihood, Jesus, who is the very essence of the jubilee, was born on October 2, in 7 B.C. The year 7 B.C. is a jubilee year. October 2, in 7 B.C., was the day of atonement on which the “*shofar*” (ram’s horn) of the jubilee was to be sounded. Thus, both the day of atonement and the year 7 B.C. identified with the jubilee. Remember, the jubilee focused on the fact that the Gospel was to be published to the entire world. And Jesus came to this earth to make all the arrangements so that the Gospel could be published throughout the world. Thus, we see the remarkable link of the timing of the birth of Jesus, who is the very essence of the jubilee, with the day and year that were focused on the jubilee.

2. The next important juncture in God’s salvation program was the day Jesus officially began His work as the Messiah. It was the day He was announced to the world as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world. According to our modern calendar, it was September 26, A.D. 29. According to the Biblical calendar, it is the first day of the seventh month, which

is the date of the feast of jubilee (incorrectly called the feast of trumpets by theologians). We surely can see the beautiful similarities of the announcement of the official beginning of the ministry of Jesus, our jubilee, with a feast of jubilee.

3. Jesus, as the sacrificial Lamb of God, literally suffered the penalty as demanded by the law of God, before He created the world (see To God Be the Glory). It had to be equivalent to the punishment that would have been given to those He came to save, as He made the payment for their sins. This demonstration of this enormous punishment began on Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane and continued until just before sundown on Friday. This awesome event occurred precisely at the same time that the Bible commanded that the feast of the Passover was to be observed. That Friday, according to the Biblical calendar, was the fourteenth day of the first month. According to our modern calendar, it was April 1, A.D. 33.

4. In A.D. 33, the Biblical calendar called for the observance of the feast of Pentecost on Sunday, May 22, according to our modern calendar. This was the day the firstfruits of the harvest were to be brought in. On that very same day, May 22, A.D. 33, the Holy Spirit was poured out and the firstfruits of the church age were brought into the kingdom of God. Remember, in Acts 2:41, we read that about 3,000 persons were saved on that day.

5. Each Pentecost day throughout the church age, which continued from A.D. 33 to 1988, emphasized that the firstfruits were to continue to be brought in. Therefore, the church age would have ended the day before Pentecost in 1988. This was May 21, 1988. Thus, the church age continued for exactly 1,955 full years, to the very day.

6. As we continue in this study, we will learn that the church age ended on May 21, 1988 (A.D.). This date coincided with the beginning of the time when God began to prepare the churches and the world for what the Bible calls the “great tribulation.” We shall also learn that during the first 2,300 days of this 8,400-day tribulation, virtually no one could become saved.

7. But then, as we shall discover in this study, 2,300 days after the beginning of the great tribulation, God’s final great salvation program began. That day of history was September 7, 1994 (A.D.). It was on that date that God again poured out His Holy Spirit, so that for the next 17 years, all over the world, a great multitude of people would become saved.* Indeed, no one was aware of this awesome action of God at the time it occurred. But the Bible assures us that it did occur. That September 7, according to the Biblical calendar, was the first

day of the seventh month, when the feast of jubilee (remember, it has been incorrectly called the feast of trumpets), was to be observed. That year, 1994, when this grand event happened, was a jubilee year, just as 7 B.C., when Jesus was born, was a jubilee year. Again we see the remarkable linking of the timing of the unfolding of God's salvation plan with the Biblical timing of the ceremonial feast days.

The Precision of Important Salvation Events

By carefully studying the Bible we learn that the unfolding of important junctures in God's salvation plan for the world is not at all haphazard or erratic. Every event followed a very carefully planned time program that is revealed in God's law book, the Bible. The following are a number of examples of this.

1. Israel was in Egypt for 430 years to the very day (Exodus 12:40-41). The years were 1877 B.C. to 1447 B.C.

2. When Israel left Egypt in 1447 B.C., it was precisely, to the very day, 40 years later that they arrived at the Jordan River, which they then crossed over to go into the land of Canaan.

3. As prophesied in Daniel 12:12, it was precisely 1,335 days, inclusive, that Christ's work as the Messiah took place. He officially began his work on September 26, A.D. 29, when He was announced as the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Exactly 1,335 days later, inclusive, on May 22, A.D. 33, the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church age officially began.

4. The church age embraced, to the very day, exactly 1,955 years in that it began on Pentecost day, May 22, A.D. 33, and ended the day before Pentecost on May 21, 1988 (A.D.).

* In Ezekiel 39:29, we read, "**Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.**" The phrase "**Neither will I hide my face anymore from them**" identifies with God's final salvation program, which comes during the last part of the great tribulation. We know this to be true because God's salvation program, during the 1,480 years that Israel represented the kingdom of God, and during the 1,955-year church age, when all the churches represented the kingdom of God, both ended with God turning away from them. It is only during the final ingathering, during the last part of the great tribulation, that God will never again turn His face from them. See also Joel 2:28-32, where God speaks about pouring out the Holy Spirit. These verses are quoted in Acts 2:17-21. In Joel 2, the focus is on the pouring out of the Holy Spirit during the great tribulation. In Acts 2, the focus of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is on Pentecost in A.D. 33 and the great tribulation.

5. There were exactly, to the very year, 13,000 years from creation, in the year 11,013 B.C., until the end of the church age, which was also the beginning of God's final activity of salvation and judgment. We will learn that this began in A.D.1988.

6. There are exactly 7,000 years from the flood of Noah's day, which destroyed everything on the earth in 4990 B.C., to A.D. 2011, which we will learn is the year that God will destroy this present universe and recreate it as new heavens and a new earth.

7. Even as it was prophesied in Daniel 8:14, we will learn that there were precisely 2,300 days from the beginning of the great tribulation, which coincided with the end of the church age on May 21, 1988, until the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which occurred on September 7, 1994, is the beginning date of the final, magnificent 17-year harvest of great numbers of people who have become true believers.

These are some of the very precise time periods that show that God had prearranged the unfolding of the Gospel in the world.

God Used the Temple to Illustrate Spiritual Truth

We must remember that sometimes the Bible presents an historical event to illustrate the wrath of God as well as the mercy and love of God. For example, the Bible describes the awful judgment of God on the world of Noah's day. He utilized the waters of the flood to destroy mankind. However, in I Peter 3:20, while speaking of this flood, God indicates that **"eight souls were saved by water."** Likewise, Israel passed through the Red Sea in safety to illustrate salvation. However, the Egyptian armies were destroyed in the Red Sea to illustrate God's judgment on the wicked. Thus, in these illustrations, God is showing His wrath and His mercy through the same event.

In similar fashion, God used the magnificent temple constructed by Solomon to illustrate God's judgment and also to illustrate God's salvation. This temple, like the tabernacle at Shiloh, illustrated the building of God's kingdom during the church age. However, in time, God destroyed both the temple at Shiloh and also Solomon's temple in Jerusalem because of the wickedness of Israel and Judah. Likewise, in our time, God has brought His judgment upon the churches of our day. These churches were typified by the tabernacle and the temple. Not one of the churches of today is any longer included in God's salvation plan. The temple, which typified the entire church age, no longer exists. Not one stone is left upon another (Matthew 24:1-3).

But God also uses Solomon's temple to typify and illustrate God's wonderful salvation plan that is taking place in our day. He does this in the Bible

as He describes the dedication of the temple. All of the events that occurred in connection with this dedication took place in the seventh month of the Biblical calendar (I Kings 8:2). The Bible speaks of the seventh month as the end of the year (Exodus 23:16, 34:22). It is in our day that we are in the end of the year,* insofar as the history of the world is concerned. Thus, we must understand that all of the events involved in the dedication of Solomon's temple were pointing to, or typifying, the Gospel events that are occurring in our day, the time of the final harvest.

The Temple Dedication Information Gives Important Time Information

In connection with the dedication of Solomon's temple, God employed an interesting way to show that the end of the world is one day later than when we would expect it. In so doing, God is also showing us the great precision of the timing of the end of the world. To obtain this information, we should first note how God uses the phrase "last day."

As we examine the phrase "last day" we find that it is recorded in only eight places in the Bible. Four of these places are recorded in John 6, where God speaks about giving all the true believers their resurrected bodies on the last day (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54). The phrase "last day" is also found in John 11:24. There we read that Martha, standing beside the tomb of her dead brother Lazarus, declares, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

... I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

This phrase is also recorded in John 12:48, where Christ declares:

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

The remaining two instances of God's use of the phrase "last day" are, very significantly, in connection with the last day of the feast of tabernacles. They are recorded in John 7:37 and Nehemiah 8:18.

The feast of tabernacles was simultaneous with the feast of ingathering. These feasts are definitely linked to the end of the world. Thus, we are not surprised that God uses the words "last day" in connection with the feast of tabernacles. That is, the last day of the feast of tabernacles should show us the timing of the last day of the end of the world.

* It is significant that the Bible speaks of Enoch being taken into heaven, without dying, at the age of 365 (Genesis 5:23-24). Surely it is not coincidental that this first example of the rapture occurred to a true believer at an age that coincides with one year (365 days), of earth's history.

In the Biblical ceremonial calendar, these simultaneous feasts, the feast of tabernacles and the feast of ingathering, were to be seven days in length, beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month. The day immediately following these seven days, which the Bible calls the eighth day, was also called both a “solemn assembly” (Leviticus 23:36) and a “Sabbath” (Leviticus 23:39). Thus, the feast of tabernacles actually included eight days that began on the 15th day of the seventh month and concluded on the 22nd day, and this final day was to be observed as a Sabbath.

It was God’s purpose, however, to show us that when we make the application of these days to the end of the world, the eighth day is to be considered to be two days in length, so that the eighth day will also include the 23rd day of the Biblical seventh month.

This truth is developed by God in the Biblical information relating to the dedication of Solomon’s temple, which can be shown to be strikingly identified with the events taking place at the end of the world. In II Chronicles, God describes the dedication of Solomon’s temple. We should look at a few statements God has made in connection with the dedication. They are as follows.

1. The time was in the seventh month (II Chronicles 7:10).
2. The dedication of the altar was seven days (II Chronicles 7:9).
3. Then they kept the feast of tabernacles (feast of the Bible) seven days (II Chronicles 7:8-9). Thus, 14 days had passed (I Kings 8:65).
4. The seven-day celebration of the feast of tabernacles was followed by the eighth day when they observed a solemn assembly (II Chronicles 7:8-9).

This eighth day would have been observed as a Sabbath day (Leviticus 23:39), when no work would be performed, and travel would have been limited. According to Acts 1:12, the distance between the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem, which was less than one-half mile, was the only length or distance they were permitted to travel on a Sabbath day. Remarkably, in I Kings 8:66, we read:

On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

The Eighth Day, October 21, 2011

As we have noted, this eighth day ordinarily was the 22nd day of the seventh month and was to be observed as a Sabbath. The people had come from

all over the land of Israel (I Kings 8:65). How could they be expected to do all the work of moving and traveling on a day that was to be observed as a Sabbath? God solved this problem by indicating that the eighth day was to continue for an additional day. That additional one day was the 23rd day of the seventh month. We read this in II Chronicles 7:10:

And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

Please note the almost identical language of this verse to that of I Kings 8:66 (quoted above). Remember, I Kings 8:66 referred to the eighth day, which was the 22nd day of the month, whereas II Chronicles 7:10 refers to the 23rd day of the month.

This disclosure is very significant when we realize that the dedication of the temple and the observance of the feast of tabernacles (the feast of the Bible), are intimately identified with the completion of God's judgment plan at the end of the world. It means that in A.D. 2011, the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles (feast of the Bible) is actually to be considered two days in length. Whereas the eighth day (the 22nd day of the seventh month), is October 20, in actuality, it is to be observed as they did in II Chronicles 7:10, on the 23rd day of the seventh month, which is October 21, 2011. Thus, we must realize that October 21, 2011 will be the final day of this earth's existence.

Another Look at the Feast of Tabernacles

When we examined the dedication of Solomon's temple, we discovered that the feast of tabernacles was an integral part of the dedication activities. We also learned that it helps us to know the timing of the end of the world. But why was it called the feast of tabernacles?

We will discover that the Hebrew word that is translated as "tabernacle" in connection with this feast is a Hebrew word that is more commonly translated "booth." Moreover, we will discover that the word "booth" identifies with the cloud and the fire that covered the tabernacle throughout the 40 years that Israel was in the wilderness, on their way from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Furthermore, we will discover that the cloud and the fire represented the commandments of God, thus making the booth represent the commandments of God. Therefore, the feast of tabernacles actually is the feast of the law of God or the feast of the Bible. The feast of tabernacles (the feast of the Bible), emphasizes the glory of God as developed by the glory of God's law book, the Bible.

The Hebrew word for tabernacle that God placed in the phrase “feast of tabernacles” is the word “*sukkah*,” which is also translated “booth.” A passage of the Bible that helps us to understand this word is Isaiah 4:5-6. There we read:

And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

The Hebrew word translated as “defence” in this verse would be better translated as “cover.” The phrase translated as “**there shall be a tabernacle**” would be better translated as “**it shall be a booth.**” Thus, these verses would be better translated:

And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, upon her assembly, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a cover. And it shall be a booth for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a cover from storm and from rain.

These verses are teaching the following.

1. “**every dwelling place of mount Zion**” This refers to every aspect of the kingdom of God, of which we have become a citizen when we become saved.

2. “**upon her assembly**” This is a singular word that speaks of one great eternal assembly that consists of all those who have become saved.

3. “**a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night**” This refers to the law of God, the Bible, which gives spiritual direction to mankind.

4. “**upon all the glory shall be a cover**” This refers to the glory of the kingdom of God that has the cloud by day and the fire by night as a cover.

5. “**and it shall be a tabernacle [booth] for a shadow in the daytime from the heat and for a place of refuge and for a cover [hiding place] from**

storm and from rain.” The cloud and the fire, that is, the Word of God is a booth that covers and provides a hiding place from the wrath of God, the storm and the rain.

Earlier we learned that the cloud and pillar of fire relate to the Word of God. We can see this as we note that the Bible has much to say about the cloud and pillar of fire giving direction to Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness. For example, we read in Numbers 9:21-23:

And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

In Numbers 9:15-23, God is very clearly associating the cloud by day and the fire by night with the commandments of God. And of course, the commandments of God are the Bible.

We must understand, of course, that if we never become saved, the law of God will cause the damnation of His anger to fall upon us. However, if we are one of God's elect (and we can know we are, if we have received our new resurrected soul), then we are not under the penalty of eternal damnation for our sins. That is, the law can no longer condemn us. Instead, the law is the guarantee that God gives us that we are eternally secure in Christ. We are hidden by the law of God from the wrath of God. And the law of God, the Bible, gives us complete direction as to how we are to live altogether to God's glory.

Thus, we have learned that the feast of tabernacles is altogether focused on the Bible by which God reveals His exceedingly great glory. So, it would be more accurate to speak of the “feast of tabernacles” as the “feast of the Bible.” The feast of the Bible was observed on the same days that the feast of ingathering was observed. The feast of ingathering came at the same time that the final harvesting of the year took place. Spiritually, this points to the truth that the Bible is glorified by the feast of the Bible. This focus on the glorious nature of the Bible is further demonstrated as God brings in a final huge harvest of people who become saved just before the end of the world.

This final ingathering is prophesied in Romans 9:28. There we read:

For he will finish the work [*Greek, logos*], and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work [*logos*] will the Lord make upon the earth.

The Greek word “*logos*” is ordinarily translated as “word.” Therefore, this verse refers to the present short period of time, which we will learn from the Bible is the final 17 years of the earth’s history. The key to the importance of these 17 years is the glorious Word (*logos*) of God by which God is presently saving a great multitude which no man could number (Revelation 7:9). This final evangelization of the world that is presently taking place will not stumble or falter. It will transition without any defects or hesitations into its eternal completeness, when in a very short time Christ returns and raptures all the true believers, the elect, throughout the world to be eternally with Him in the new heavens and the new earth.

Chapter 4.

We Begin Our Search for the Timetable of the End

We shall now outline the basic truths we learn from the Bible that direct us to an exact understanding of the final timeline of history.

Throughout the last 2,000 years, during which time the entire Bible has been available, devout, dedicated true believers have earnestly searched the Bible to try to discover the future unfolding of this earth's history. They were all aware of one truth, that is, there would come a time when this world's history would come to an end. It would coincide with the return of Jesus as the righteous judge of the earth, and the rapture of all the true believers to a new heaven and a new earth, where eternally they will reign with Christ.

However, before this time would come, there would be a period of some kind of great tribulation. Commonly, this was wrongly understood to be a time of massive physical persecution of the believers in Christ. In reality, it is a time that can only be understood spiritually.

Chapters of the Bible like Matthew 24 and Mark 13 were particularly studied with great care because they seemed to focus on such a tribulation coming just before the return of Christ. It is true that within these two chapters, God gives us the best clue to help us begin to build a Biblical framework that ties the past to the end of history. That clue is in Mark 13:28, where God declares:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

This verse could not begin to be understood until about 60 years ago, on May 14, 1948. It was at that time that the Biblical fig tree, the nation of Israel, again became a viable nation among the nations of the world. This was almost a miracle, because for the entire period from A.D. 70, when Israel together with the city of Jerusalem and the temple were totally destroyed by the Romans, Israel had not been a nation of the world with its own homeland. However, almost miraculously, on May 14, 1948, it again became a nation with its own homeland.

Immediately a great many Christians correctly associated this dramatic event with the fig tree prophecy of Mark 13:28. They correctly saw that God typified national Israel as a fig tree, and that a fig tree in leaf related to Israel again becoming a nation.*

Because this verse insists that when the fig tree is in leaf, all of the events recorded in Mark 13 and Matthew 24 will then occur, we must realize that

* Israel, for example, is typified by the fig tree that Christ cursed, so that it would never again bring forth fruit (Mark 11:12-21).

God has given an outstanding clue that the time of the end of the world has come very close. This is because a careful reading of Matthew 24 and Mark 13 shows that these events identify with a time of great tribulation (Matthew 24:21), which will be followed by the return of Christ (Matthew 24:29-31).

Another clue that God gives us is found in Revelation 7:9-14. There God speaks of a great multitude which no man could number, that would come out of the great tribulation. (The article “the” was not translated, but it is in the original Greek.) Additionally, in Luke 21:22, which is also speaking of the time of great tribulation, God speaks of this tribulation as a time of vengeance. God’s punishment on the wicked is a time of vengeance. During the great tribulation, God has begun to prepare the peoples of the world and all the local churches for the completion of God’s judgment process.

The next verse that helps us is Matthew 24:22, where we read:

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

It appears that this verse is saying that this is a time of great tribulation when God’s vengeance on mankind will begin. However, because many of God’s elect, those who were chosen by God to become saved (Ephesians 1:3-6), have not yet become saved, the period of tribulation has been shortened. In other words, this period of great tribulation is greatly identified with God’s judgment plan, but at the same time it is identified with some kind of great surge in salvation activity. How can we reconcile these ideas?

We have learned from the examination of the unfolding of historical events of the Bible, and from the teaching of Colossians 2:16-17, that they link to ceremonial feast days. The year of jubilee, for example, emphasizes that liberty (salvation) is to be published to the world. The fact is, all of the Biblical evidence points to the very high likelihood that Jesus, who is the very essence of the jubilee, was born in the jubilee year 7 B.C., on the day of atonement, at which time the *shophar* (ram’s horn) of the jubilee (Hebrew “*teruah*”) sounded (Leviticus 25:9).*

Moreover, we learned that Jesus was officially announced as the Lamb of God on September 26, A.D. 29, which Biblically was Tishri 1 (Tishri is the seventh month), which is also called the day of jubilee (Numbers 29:1). Because Christ, the jubilee, had come and was officially announced, the stage was set to send the Gospel into all the world. Seven weeks after the Sunday when Jesus was

* The English translations in some passages translate the Hebrew word “*teruah*” as “trumpets.” But in Leviticus 25:9, regarding the day of atonement, we read that this same word “*teruah*” is translated correctly as “jubilee.” Thus, the phrase “day of blowing the trumpets” would be better translated as “day of jubilee.”

resurrected, the Holy Spirit was poured out and worldwide evangelization did begin.

It would seem that if there is a great surge of salvation activity, then it would somehow relate to a jubilee year. Therefore, in the years following 1948, when would there be another jubilee year? There are exactly 50 years from one jubilee year to the next jubilee year. Indeed, 1994 is the first jubilee year after 1948. It is exactly 2,000 years after the jubilee year of 7 B.C. when Christ, who is the very essence of the jubilee, was born.

The jubilee definitely relates to God's salvation program. But the Bible assures us that this jubilee year is in the midst of the time of great tribulation, which is a time of preparation for God's final judgment activities. How can these simultaneous contradictory events be at the same time and relate to the year 1994?

The prophecy of Daniel 8 becomes very helpful. In Matthew 24, where we learn about this great tribulation, God directs us to look for more information in the Book of Daniel. Matthew 24:15-16 declares:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

In Daniel Chapter 8, God speaks of a time of 2,300 days during which a fierce king would rule. He would cause the daily sacrifice to be taken away and the abomination or transgression of desolation to take place so that the sanctuary and host would be trodden under foot (Daniel 8:12-14). Spiritually, this means that the true Gospel would be replaced with a satanic gospel. Significantly, concerning the vision of 2,300 days, God declares in Daniel 8:17, **“for at the time of the end shall be the vision.”**

We have noted that the year 1994 is a jubilee year that focuses on the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. Is that year, then, the end of the 2,300-day period spoken of in Daniel 8, during which great abomination is taking place?

If that is so, and 2,300 days earlier than 1994 was the year 1988, so, could that be the year when the great tribulation began? That would mean that during that time, for the first part of the great tribulation, virtually no one was being saved. But it would also mean that during the last part of the tribulation, a great multitude, which no man could number, would become saved (Revelation 7:9-14).

As we puzzle about this, we should take note that in Acts 7:11 the words “great affliction” are used in connection with the experience of Jacob and all Israel when they left the promised land, the land of Canaan, to go to Egypt to

escape a seven-year famine. We know that this was a terrible experience for Jacob. The words “great affliction” are the same Greek words that are translated “great tribulation” in Matthew 24:21.*

Very significantly, we find that Jacob went to Egypt during his time of great tribulation in the year 1877 B.C. The year that we are examining in connection with the great tribulation of Matthew 24:21 is the jubilee year 1994. These years, 1877 and 1994, are 3,870 years apart. $1,877 + 1,994 - 1 = 3,870$. (Since there is no year zero, in going from the Old Testament calendar to the New Testament, one year must be subtracted.) Very strikingly, $3,870 = 3 \times 1,290$.

The number 1,290 appears to be very significant because there was another time when Israel was driven from the promised land. Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed by the Babylonians. This occurred in the year 587 B.C., which was during a 70-year period of great wrath of God on the nation of Judah. This 70-year period began in the year 609 B.C. and ended in the year 539 B.C., when the city of Babylon was defeated by the Medes and Persians. The awful event, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, occurred in the year 587 B.C. Curiously, and surely significantly, the three years we are examining (1877 B.C., 587 B.C., and A.D. 1994) are linked together by the number 1,290.

$$1877 \text{ B.C.} - 587 \text{ B.C.} = 1,290 \text{ years}$$

$$587 \text{ B.C. to A.D. } 1994 - 1 = 2,580 \text{ years} = 2 \times 1,290$$

$$1877 \text{ B.C. to A.D. } 1994 - 1 = 3,870 \text{ years} = 3 \times 1,290$$

The number 1,290 is highlighted in the Bible in connection with the spiritual activity that takes place at each of the above three times. The Bible emphasizes this role of the number 1,290 in Daniel 12:11, where we read:

And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

We must remember that at times, God speaks of a day to represent a year. For example, in Numbers 14:34, God indicated that Israel would remain in the wilderness for 40 years, in accord with the 40 days the spies searched out the

* The words “great tribulation” are found only four times in the Bible. They are in Matthew 24:21 and Revelation 7:14, which we have already examined, and also, Acts 7:11 and Revelation 2:22. In Luke 21:23, God chose the Greek words that are translated as “great distress” in speaking of the same period.

land of Canaan. Thus, we know that the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 can be understood as 1,290 years. God is definitely linking together the terrible time when Jacob had to leave the promised land to go to Egypt, to the nation of Judah being cast out of Jerusalem, and to something awful that happened in the jubilee year 1994. What awful thing could that be?

We do know that the land of Canaan is used in the Bible to typify the kingdom of God. Jerusalem and the temple also externally typify the kingdom of God. Thus, for Jacob and his family to leave the land of Canaan, it was like leaving the kingdom of God. Also, to be driven from Jerusalem, and to know that the temple had been destroyed, that was like being cast out of the kingdom of God. But what typified the kingdom of God in the year 1994? We know that throughout the church age, all of the local churches typified the kingdom of God because they were the divine institution designed by God to externally represent that kingdom. They were the caretakers of the Bible, and they had the responsibility of sending the Gospel into all the world.

The great tribulation of Jacob's experience (Acts 7:11-12) encompassed seven years of famine, but during that period, the worst time occurred at the end of two years, when Jacob had to leave the promised land (1877 B.C.). When Jacob and his family were commanded to leave the land of Canaan, it was like being commanded to leave the kingdom of God. Nothing could be more traumatic than that. It meant that the promised land, the land of Canaan, had been surrendered to the heathens who were in the kingdom of Satan. Therefore, symbolically, it was like Satan was given the rule of the kingdom of God. Therefore, the year 1877 B.C. was a sad and terrible year.

Likewise, the most terrible of Israel's 70-year experience was the year 587 B.C., when Jerusalem and the temple, which also typified the kingdom of God, were destroyed. In that year, by God's command, the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed by the king of Babylon, who typified Satan (Isaiah 14). Again, it was like the kingdom of God on earth had come to an end.

These two historical events typified what happened in the jubilee year, A.D. 1994. For 1,955 years, the churches all over the world were symbolic of the kingdom of God, even as was the land of Canaan in Jacob's day, and as Judea, the land of Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple were in Israel's day.

We will discover that some time earlier than 1994, God was finished using the churches to represent the kingdom of God. Thus, the wonderful jubilee year 1994 was a horrible year for the churches. All over the world, God was again saving countless numbers of people, but the churches remained under the spiritual rule of Satan. Truly, God was forever finished using the churches to represent the kingdom of God. The situation was just as it was in 1877 B.C., when the land of Canaan came under the complete rulership of the heathen, and in the year 587 B.C., when the land of Judea came under the rule of the king of Babylon.

The year 1877 B.C. divided the tribulation that Jacob experienced into two parts, even as the year 587 B.C. divided the 70-year tribulation period that Israel experienced into two parts. So, too, the great tribulation of our day was divided into two parts in the year 1994, when it became certain that God was forever finished using the churches to represent the kingdom of God.

Since these two tribulation periods of seven and seventy years are patterns of the great tribulation of our day, we could expect that this present tribulation period will also identify with the number seven. We have already discovered that the first part of the great tribulation appears to identify with the 2,300 days of Daniel 8. Because Jacob's tribulation experience encompassed seven years, and Judah's tribulation experience encompassed 70 years, we can expect that the total time of the present great tribulation period will also feature the number seven. It could be 7,000 days or possibly $7 \times 12 \times 100$, which equals 8,400 days. Spiritually, the number 100 signifies "completeness" and the number 12 signifies "fullness." Later we will discover that the great tribulation period is 8,400 days (23 years), and this is solidly proven by much additional Biblical information. Amazingly, there are exactly 8,400 days in 23 years, and the number 23 very frequently identifies with God's wrath.

Furthermore, we will note the parallelism that exists between the division into two parts of the seven years, the 70 years, and the 8,400 days. As we have learned, the seven-year period of Jacob's tribulation was broken into two parts. The traumatic experience of leaving the land of Canaan was at the end of the first two years of the seven years (Genesis 45:6-8). Therefore, the first part was two-sevenths, or 28.6% of the whole period. Likewise, the tribulation of Judea began in the year 609 B.C. when King Josiah died, and continued to the year 539 B.C. when Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians. This 70-year period was divided into two parts, the first part being 22 years. Twenty-two is 31.4% of 70 years.

Remember, the tribulation of Jacob and the tribulation of Judea are patterns of our present great tribulation. Therefore, we would expect the first part of the great tribulation of our day also to be close to 28.6% or 31.4% of the whole tribulation period. Indeed, we find that 2,300 days is 27.4% of 8,400 days. We can see the parallelism that exists by the closeness of 27.4% to 28.6% and 31.4%. Later we will discover many proofs in the Bible that show us that the tentative division of 2,300 days as the first part of a total 8,400-day great tribulation period is very accurate.

Thus, we learn that the 8,400 days feature the number 7 ($7 \times 12 \times 100$). It also appears to be divided into two parts, the first part being about 30% of the whole time. And because 23 years, which in the Bible frequently identifies with God's wrath, is exactly 8,400 days in length, we are strongly encouraged to believe that the great tribulation period is precisely 8,400 days in length.

We read in I Peter 4:17:

For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

In this verse, God is speaking about a preparatory time for God's judgment to come, and it is to begin in the churches. Therefore, a period of 8,400 days (23 years) could possibly be that period of time.

The 2,300 days that identify with the first part of this great tribulation can also identify with Revelation 8:1, where we read:

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

The time of about "half an hour" was a time when all over the world, and within all of the churches, virtually no one was being saved. We can know this because we read in Luke 15:10:

Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

When people are not becoming saved, there is silence in heaven because there is no joy.

Thus, we are discovering that at the end of the church age, there is an 8,400-day (23 year) period that begins with a 2,300-day period, when the whole world, and especially the churches, are being prepared for the day of judgment.

That is why we read, for example, in Revelation 13:7 and 8 about a beast (Satan) who comes out of the sea (the wrath of God), and who overcomes the saints (drives them out of the churches), and also rules over the world.

However, as we have already noted, the year 1994 was a jubilee year, at which time the Holy Spirit was poured out (Ezekiel 39:25-29; Joel 2:28-32), and a final great period of worldwide evangelism was to take place. We would like to believe that this meant that the churches would again be used of God. However, as we are learning, the local churches that came into existence all over the world were typified by the temple, and God assures us that the time would come that the temple would be destroyed and there would not be left one stone upon another (Matthew 24:1-3). Nowhere do we read that the temple, spoken of in Matthew 24, was rebuilt after it was trodden down. That is, never again would God use any church to bring the Gospel to the world.

The great tribulation extends over the entire 8,400 days, which is exactly a full 23 years. This means that starting in 1994, the year of jubilee, God used some other method to send the Gospel into the world. He no longer used the

local congregations. That is, while somehow, the year 1994 was a wonderful year of renewed Gospel outreach into all the world, for the local churches, it was a most terrible year. This was so because the churches are to continue to the end of the 8,400-day great tribulation period under the wrath of God.

The Date of the End of the Church Age

The information we have examined thus far assures us that the jubilee year 1994 was the end of a period of 2,300 days, during which virtually no one was being saved anywhere in the world. That fact helps us to discover the date of the end of the church age, which must coincide with the beginning of the 23-year (8,400-day) great tribulation.

A time of 2,300 days is a few months longer than six years. Therefore, the end of the church age must have occurred six years earlier than the year 1994. Thus, it must have occurred in the year 1988.

To discover the precise day in 1988 when the church age came to an end, we must remember that the church age was linked to the ceremonial day of the feast of weeks, which is also called the day of Pentecost. It was observed on the Sunday that was seven weeks after the first Saturday (seventh-day Sabbath), which came after the Passover feast. It was on that day that the firstfruits were brought to the temple. This anticipated the bringing in of the harvest, from all over the world, the first harvest of true believers who were brought into the kingdom of God. The official beginning of the church age was on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 33. That day, when synchronized with our calendar, was May 22, A.D. 33.

As the day of Pentecost arrived each year, spiritually, it pointed to the continuation of bringing in the firstfruits for another year. However, in A.D. 1988, the bringing in of the firstfruits that had identified with Pentecost came to an end. Since in the year 1988, Pentecost occurred on May 22, the last day of the church age would have been the day before May 22, which was May 21. Curiously, this means the church age, which officially began on May 22, A.D. 33, had continued from A.D. 33 to 1988, which equals 1,955 full years, to the very day. This is another indication of the precision of God's timeline of history.

Thus, May 21, 1988, was the official end of the church age and the official beginning of the great tribulation. The 2,300 days of the first part of the great tribulation would then have ended on September 7, 1994. Significantly, September 7, 1994, according to the feast day Biblical calendar, was Tishri 1, which in the Bible was also called the feast of jubilee. Remember the word "jubilee" has everything to do with sending the Gospel into the world.

Following the 2,300-day period, there are 6,100 days ($8,400 - 2,300 = 6,100$) remaining of the 23-year (8,400-day) period of the great tribulation. These 6,100 days, therefore, will end on May 21, 2011.

Earlier we learned that the last day of this earth's existence, as indicated by the observance of the feast of tabernacles (feast of the Bible) is October 21, 2011. Thus, after the great tribulation there must be a final period of 153 days, which we will discover is the day of judgment, when God finishes His punishing process on the unsaved.

By God's mercy, we have been able to tentatively discover the Biblical timeline of history all the way to the end of the world. We will now show how the Bible gives many proofs of the accuracy of this timeline.

A fundamental rule that has greatly helped in this endeavor is that which is set forth in Colossians 2:16-17, where God declares:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

In these very enlightening verses, God declares the principle that the timing of the observances of the various ceremonial laws are pointing to and are related to the timing of things to come. Therefore, we immediately understand why Jesus, the Lamb of God, was crucified on the 14th day of the first month (Nisan 14) of the Biblical calendar, which was the Passover. We can also understand why the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church age began about seven weeks later, on the very day Israel was celebrating the feast of Pentecost.

Another very helpful prophecy of the Bible that we learned about earlier in this study was that of Mark 13:28- 29, in which God instructs us:

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

National Israel is frequently typified in the Bible as a fig tree. After having been without country or national identity for almost 2,000 years, Israel almost miraculously again became a viable nation in the world. This stupendous event has been correctly identified by a great many Biblical teachers as a fulfillment of this Mark 13 prophecy. Since this event occurred on May 14, 1948, we are taught by these verses that all of the events outlined in Mark 13 were very soon to take place, in the years following 1948.

Another helpful clue that helped us discover the timeline leading to the end of the world is the fact that the year 1994 was a jubilee year. Earlier we had learned that Jesus, who is the very essence of the jubilee, was born in 7 B.C., which was a jubilee year. Remember, the jubilee signified that liberty (salvation) was to be published to the world.

A very careful study of Mark 13, and parallel chapters like Matthew 24 and Luke 17 and Luke 21, indicates that the following events would develop as God closed the history of the world.

1. A time would come when all the churches throughout the world, which were typified as the temple of God, would come to an end. “**There shall not be left here one stone upon another**” (Matthew 24:2). They would be overrun by Satan who is called the “**abomination of desolation**” (Matthew 24:15).*

2. This would be a time of great tribulation when the true believers were driven out and were commanded to leave their churches. It would be a time of great apostasy in the churches, as Satan came into many of them with signs and wonders (Matthew 24:24).

3. This time of tribulation was typified by the seven-year tribulation that Jacob experienced when in the year 1877 B.C. he was commanded by God to leave the promised land, Canaan, and go to live in Egypt.

4. It was also typified by the 70-year period, 609 B.C. to 539 B.C., that Judah suffered under God’s wrath. This was the 70-year period from 609 B.C., when Josiah, the last good king, was killed, until 539 B.C., when Babylon was conquered by the Medes and Persians, thus allowing the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem. In the middle of this dreadful time that was experienced by Israel, in the year 587 B.C., Jerusalem and the magnificent temple of Solomon were completely destroyed by the Babylonians.

5. To a lesser degree, we might note that it was also typified by the seven-month period when the tabernacle was in Shiloh and the ark was captured by the Philistines and taken to their land. This occurred in the year 1068-1067 B.C.

Thus, the number 7 appeared to be intimately involved with the duration of the great tribulation that we read about in Matthew 24.

We learned that in all likelihood, the number 23 was associated with the period of great tribulation. Repeatedly, it is used in the Bible to signify God’s wrath, and the period of great tribulation is definitely a time when God is preparing the churches and the world for God’s wrath, which will immediately follow this period. The numbers 7 and 23 both became increasingly relevant

* You are invited to send for the free books *The End of the Church Age and After* and *Wheat and Tares*, which give much more Biblical information concerning the end of the church age.

when we discovered that precisely 8,400 days equal a full 23 years. The number 8,400 equals $7 \times 12 \times 100$, thus allowing the number 7 and the number 23 to be featured by an 8,400-day, that is, 23-year, great tribulation period.

We discovered that this 8,400-day tribulation period was divided into two parts. According to what we learned from Revelation 8:1, during the first part, virtually no one was being saved anywhere in the world. We identified the first part with the 2,300 evening mornings of Daniel 8:13-14.

We discovered that during the second part of the great tribulation, a great multitude, which no man could number, was being saved all over the world (Revelation 7:9-14). This was to take place altogether outside of the churches, which are to remain under the wrath of God.

We also discovered that the ceremonial feast of tabernacles (feast of the Bible), which must be a shadow of things to come, was identified with the very last day. Since the last day must identify with the end of the world, the Biblical timing of the feast of tabernacles must also identify with the end of the world.

One more difficult bit of information must be kept in mind, and that is the declaration of Mark 13:24-26, where we read:

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

We must still learn more about this period.

Summarizing all that we have thus far discovered, we can conclude that the development of the events preparing for the end of the world appear to be as follows.

1. The church age, which began in A.D. 33, would end sometime after 1948, when Israel again became a viable nation among the nations of the world.

2. Because the church age began at the time of Pentecost, and it has been intimately identified with Pentecost, the bringing in of the firstfruits of the harvest, the official end of the church age, must be the day before a Pentecost date in whatever year the church age was to end.

3. Because the last part of the great tribulation was to identify with a great multitude being saved, that last part must begin in the year 1994, which was a jubilee year.

4. Because the first part of the great tribulation must identify with the 2,300 days of Daniel 8, when virtually no one was to become saved, the beginning of the great tribulation, which must coincide with the end of the church age, must have occurred sometime in the year 1988 (2,300 days equal a little more than six years).

5. Since the official end of the church age should be the day before Pentecost in the year 1988, we discover that the day of Pentecost was May 22. Therefore, the end of the church age and the beginning of the great tribulation must have occurred on May 21, 1988.

6. Since the first part of the tribulation, during which time virtually no one was to become saved, was to be 2,300 days, then 2,300 days after May 21, 1988, brings us to September 7, 1994. This date then must be the beginning date of the great harvest of people who are to become saved during the remaining 6,100 days of the 8,400 (23 full years) of the great tribulation.

7. The end of 6,100 days after September 7, 1994, is May 21, 2011, which must be the end of the great tribulation.

8. In the year 2011, what is the last day of the feast of tabernacles (feast of the Bible)? We have learned that it occurs on October 21, 2011. Thus, there are five months, consisting of 153 days of our calendar, during which time the events of Mark 13:24-27 must take place. Indeed, immediately, we are encouraged that we probably have arrived at a correct understanding of the unfolding of the events that lead to the end of the world. In Revelation 9, God speaks of a period of five months that identifies with the time when the sun is darkened and judgment has begun. And 153 days, May 21 to October 21, are exactly five months.

Chapter 5.

Is Our Understanding of the Timeline of History Accurate?

But now comes the big question. How certain can we be of this timeline? This is such an awesome subject, we surely wish that God would give us more assurance, if this, indeed, is a valid understanding of the timetable of the end.

The Bible records another stupendous event that occurred that is the centerpiece of God's salvation plan. That was the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we cannot be fully assured that Christ was resurrected as proof that He had fully paid for the sins of the elect, we then would be left in doubt concerning the whole program of salvation.

To give us that assurance, we read in Acts 1:1-3:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

And God says in I Corinthians 15:3-8:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

The Bible clearly teaches that it was God's intention that the fact of Christ's resurrection was beyond dispute. Anyone who persists in denying this awesome fact is simply wise in his own eyes, and he thinks he knows more than God.

Amazingly, as God opens our eyes to the timing of the closing events of the history of the world, God also gives many proofs that assure us that we have correctly understood the precise timing of the closing events of earth's history.

Thus far we have set forth a somewhat tentative outline of the timing of the closing events of this world. Because they are so important we shall once again summarize them. We have come to the following dates.

1. The crucifixion of Jesus was on the 14th day of the first month of A.D. 33. This was Nisan 14, A.D. 33, of the Biblical calendar, and was April 1, A.D. 33, of our modern calendar.

2. The church age officially began on the following Pentecost, which was May 22, A.D. 33.

3. The church age ended and the 8,400-day great tribulation began the day before Pentecost in 1988, which was May 21, 1988.

4. The first 2,300 days of the great tribulation began on May 21, 1988, and ended on September 7, 1994.

5. The second part of the great tribulation, which consists of 6,100 days (8,400 - 2,300 = 6,100), began on September 7, 1994, and ends on May 21, 2011.

6. The final five months of the earth's history begins on May 21, 2011, and will end on October 21, 2011.

We thus far have set forth the basic outline of the important time junctures leading to the end of the world. We have also shown the Biblical information that causes us to arrive at this time information.

But now we want to examine the dates set forth in this time outline in the light of any other information the Bible can give us. We will discover that God has given so much additional information that we can know, without any doubt whatsoever, that this is an absolutely accurate timetable. We will now set forth point after point to show how tightly this time pattern fits together.

We will begin with the duration of the church age, which began on May 22, A.D. 33, and ended on May 21, 1988. The time of the church age included both the day May 22 of A.D. 33, and the day May 21 of the year 1988. This means it continued for a period of 1,955 years (1988 - 33 = 1,955) to the very day. The phrase "to the very day" harmonizes perfectly with the precision of God's past actions. For example, Israel was in Egypt 430 years to the "**selfsame day**" (Exodus 12:40-41). It can be shown from the Biblical data that from the day Israel departed from Egypt, until Israel arrived at the Jordan River to prepare to cross over, it was 40 years to the very day.

Furthermore, because Christ spoke in parables, we will see the unique character of these 1,955 years. Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Thus, words or numbers (which are also words), can have an earthly, literal meaning, and they might also have a spiritual meaning. Thus, frequently the number 3 spiritually emphasizes God's purpose. This would be a good place to again set forth the spiritual meaning God frequently emphasizes through the use of numbers.

- 2- Those who have been commissioned to bring the Gospel
- 3- God's purpose
- 4- The farthest extent in time or in distance that God spiritually has in view
- 5- The atonement, which emphasizes both judgment and salvation
- 7- The perfect fulfillment of God's purpose
- 10- The completeness of whatever is in view
- 11- The first coming of Christ, 11,000 years after creation
- 12- The fullness of whatever is in view
- 13- The end of the world, the details of which began exactly 13,000 years after creation
- 17- Heaven
- 23- God's wrath or judgment
- 37- God's wrath or judgment
- 40- Testing
- 43- God's wrath or judgment

Moreover, we have learned from the Bible that if a larger number can be broken down into smaller numbers, each of which has spiritual significance, that can help us to understand the spiritual message in the larger number. We can be

assured that the larger number is providing significant spiritual information that helps us to understand the context in which it is found.

This principle is dramatized in the 1,955 years of the church age. The number 1,955 can be broken down to $5 \times 17 \times 23$. And all three of these numbers have intense spiritual identification with the spiritual character of the church age. We read in II Corinthians 2:14-16:

Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

These verses teach us that the Gospel brings both salvation and death. Salvation identifies with heaven (17). Death identifies with God's wrath (23). Remember that the number 5 spiritually identifies with the atonement. Thus, the 1,955 years of the church age, during which time the Gospel was to be sent out into the world, clearly identifies with the very nature and character of the Gospel: $1,955 = 5 \times 17 \times 23$. Thus, the 1,955 years of the church age are founded on the atonement (5), which brings heaven (17), and brings God's wrath (23). Is this coincidental? It is not at all coincidental. It accords perfectly with the principle we have just described.

The 13,000th Anniversary of the World

One other comment should be made in connection with the year 1988. Is it coincidental that 1988 is the 13,000th anniversary of the history of the world? We have learned from the Bible that the world was created in the year 11,013 B.C. If we add 11,013 to 1988 and subtract 1 (because there is no year zero in going from the Old Testament calendar to the New Testament calendar), the sum is 13,000. Surely the year of the end of the church age, which identifies precisely with the 13,000th anniversary of the world, must indicate that God is following a very precise pre-arranged plan.

This information becomes especially interesting when we realize that from the creation year (11,013 B.C.), to the year of the Noachian flood (4990 B.C.), when God's judgment came upon the whole world, it is exactly 6,000 plus 23 years. Remember, the number 23 frequently signifies God's wrath. Likewise, from the year 4990 B.C. until A.D. 33, when Christ endured the judgment of God, it was exactly 5,000 plus 23 years, inclusive. Now we are learning that the year 2011 is the last year, and 11,013 B.C. to A.D. 2011 equals 13,000 years plus 23 years. Could all of this be coincidental? Remember, we tentatively concluded

that 2011 was the last year because we understood the great likelihood that the great tribulation would be exactly 8,400 days in duration. And 8,400 days is exactly 23 full years. And 23 added to 1988 brought us to 2011 as the end of the world.

The final 23 years that began on May 21, 1988, is the great tribulation period, which is the beginning of the end-time worldwide judgment process. It is significant that May 21, 1988, ended the church age, at which time the great tribulation judgment began, in strict accord with the Bible's prophecy of I Peter 4:17, "**judgment must begin at the house of God.**" We have thus learned that both the year 1988 and the day May 21, 1988, fit remarkably well into the development of the timeline of history.

The next important juncture in the unfolding of God's timeline was the year 1994. We learned that September 7, 1994, was exactly 2,300 days after May 21, 1988. Remember, we already have noted that the year 1994 was a jubilee year. That is, it is a year that focused on God's spiritual purpose to publish the Gospel to the world. Now we learn that September 7, 1994, was the first day of the seventh month (Tishri 1), of the Biblical ceremonial calendar.

Tishri 1 was a ceremonial feast day that was called "**a memorial of jubilee**" (Leviticus 23:24) and a "**day of jubilee**" (Numbers 29:1).* It was the same Biblical feast day that occurred in A.D. 29 when Jesus officially began His work as the jubilee, or Messiah. It was on that day that He was announced as "**the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). In A.D. 29, according to our modern calendar, that day was September 26. And according to the Biblical calendar, that day was Tishri 1, which was a jubilee feast day, just as September 7, 1994, is a jubilee feast day.

The word "jubilee" has everything to do with the proclamation of liberty to the world (Leviticus 25:10). That is why "*teruah*" is properly translated "jubilee" in connection with the day of atonement. Christ is the essence of the atonement, as well as being the essence of the jubilee. Thus, when He was announced on September 26, A.D. 29, by John the Baptist, as we read in John 1:29, "**Behold the Lamb of God,**" it was a glorious proclamation to the world that Christ was the "jubilee" who came with the Gospel of salvation.

Likewise, in the jubilee year 1994, on September 7, the Gospel was again to be proclaimed unto the whole world. And on both September 26, A.D. 29, and September 7, 1994, the Biblical ceremonial date was the first day of the seventh month. Surely, even as "*teruah*" is correctly translated as "jubilee" in Leviticus 29:9 in connection with the day of atonement, we can see that in

* Both in Leviticus 23:24 and in Numbers 29:1, God speaks about the feast of the first day of the seventh month. In both verses, the Hebrew word "*teruah*" is translated "blowing of trumpets." Several times in the Bible, the word "*teruah*" is translated as "shout" or "alarm," or "sounding." But never is it translated "blowing of trumpets" except in these two verses. However, in Leviticus 25:9, which speaks of the day of atonement, it is translated "jubilee."

Leviticus 23:2 and Numbers 29:1, which speak of “a memorial of *teruah*,” and “a day of *teruah*,” we can understand it should be translated “a memorial of jubilee” and “a day of jubilee.” Therefore, this feast, which theologians call “the feast of trumpets,” should be called “the feast of jubilee.”

Remember, we learned that September 7, 1994, ended the first 2,300 days of the 8,400- day tribulation period. On September 7, 1994, the great multitude which no man could number, all over the world, began to come into the kingdom of God. It was the day that, for the second time in the history of the world, the Holy Spirit was poured out. If it were any day other than September 7 in the year 1994, it would not have identified with the new moon feast day of Tishri 1, which was “**a shadow of things to come**” (Colossians 2:16-17). This glorious event, the ceremonial feast day of September 7, 1994 (Tishri 1, 1994), foreshadowed and actually began the 6,100-day final period of salvation.

But the year 1994, in which God began the final 6,100 days of great salvation all over the world, was also a year of horror for the churches all over the world. The Holy Spirit was poured out so that outside of the churches, that is, completely independent of any church anywhere in the world, a great multitude, which no man could number, would become saved. At the same time, within the churches, the judgment process would continue. Satan, who had been installed in all of the churches at the beginning of the great tribulation, would continue to rule. God would continue to send a “**strong delusion, that they should believe a lie**” (II Thessalonians 2:11). God would continue to prepare those in the churches for punishment.

It is an enormous horror story for the churches. They, themselves, do not recognize this. They believe they are faithfully serving Christ. But the Bible gives us the truth. There never again will be the possibility of salvation occurring under the authority of a local church.

Remember, earlier in this study, their terribly sad condition was underscored as we examined the time patterns of the historic periods of great tribulation described in the Bible. In the year 1879 B.C., Jacob began to experience great tribulation (Acts 7:11) because of a great famine in the land. Two years later, in the year 1877, Jacob was commanded to go with his entire clan to Egypt to live. They were to leave the promised land that had been given to the patriarch Abraham, his grandfather, 215 years earlier. Because the land of Canaan typified the kingdom of God, it was like being commanded to leave the kingdom of God. Even as in A.D. 1988 God gave the churches over to Satan’s rule, so, too, in 1877 B.C., the promised land, the land of Canaan, was given over to the wicked of the world to rule there. That, indeed, was a time of great tribulation.

God ties that tribulation to the tribulation of the churches, when in 1994, it is clear that God was completely finished with them, and He began preparing them for judgment. Again, when we examine the numbers that link the

tribulation of Joseph's day to the time of the present great tribulation, we find further emphasis on the spiritual character of these widely separated events. When we add 1877 to 1994, and subtract 1 year, we obtain the sum of 3,870 as the number of years between these tragic events. The number 3,870 breaks down into $3 \times 1,290$, or $10 \times 3 \times 3 \times 43$. The number 43 ordinarily signifies judgment. Therefore, the two events are linked together by this number of years, which signifies God's complete (10) purpose (3×3) in bringing judgment (43). The number 3 doubled not only signifies God's purpose, but also that He will bring it to pass (Genesis 41:32).

We learned earlier in this study that God also links this terrible time of judgment on the churches, wherein Satan is ruling today, with the enormous tribulation that Israel experienced for 70 years. It began with the death of King Josiah in 609 B.C. and continued for 70 years, until the king of Babylon was killed in 539 B.C. The year 587 B.C. was the year of particular horror. Already in the year 609 B.C., when Josiah the last good king over Israel was killed, Israel began to be increasingly in subjection to heathen kings who typified Satan ruling over the churches. However, in 587 B.C., Jerusalem was completely destroyed, together with the temple. The wicked Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who typifies Satan in the Bible, became the complete ruler of the land of Israel. How terrible!

This sad and terrible event is also a pattern that is given by God of the great tribulation of our day. It, too, is linked to the year 1994 of the present great tribulation by the sum of the years between them. Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 587 B.C. If we add 587 to 1994, and subtract 1, the sum is 2,580, which breaks down into $2 \times 1,290$, or $10 \times 3 \times 2 \times 43$. Since the number 2 spiritually represents those who should bring the Gospel, the spiritual message of this time of 2,580 years is that it was the complete (10) purpose (3) of God upon the churches, which had been commissioned by God to bring the Gospel to the world (2), that they would come into judgment (43).

Interestingly, and very helpfully, God links these three tribulations of Jacob, Israel, and our day by a verse in Daniel 12:11, where God declares:

And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Since at times the Bible uses a day to describe a year (Ezekiel 4:6), we know we can understand this as 1,290 years. There were 1,290 years between Jacob's tribulation of 1877 B.C. and Israel's tribulation of 587 B.C. Likewise, there are $3 \times 1,290$ years between Jacob's tribulation of 1877 B.C. and the churches' tribulation of 1994. Likewise, there are $2 \times 1,290$ years between the 587 B.C. tribulation of Israel and the 1994 tribulation of our day.

Please note how tightly these events fit together, indicating that, indeed, our initial understanding of the unfolding of the timeline of history becomes increasingly solidified by the language of the Bible.

The next time juncture we should carefully examine is May 21, 2011, which is the last day of the 8,400-day, or 23 full years, great tribulation. Remember, we learned that it is to be followed by a final 153-day (5 months) period that ends on October 21, 2011. Since both May 21 and October 21 occur in the year 2011, which we are learning is to be the final year of the existence of the world, we should examine that year very carefully.

One Day is as a Thousand Years

God calls our attention to that year in a most compelling way. In II Peter 3:6, God speaks of the flood that destroyed the whole world in Noah's day, and there we read:

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

Then in the next verse, God speaks about the awful judgment that will take place at the end of the world. We read in verse 7:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

Immediately following these two verses, God makes a most curious statement in II Peter 3:8, where we read:

But, beloved, 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.

What is the "one thing" that is in view when God says that He wants all the elect, who are the "beloved" of God, to be not ignorant of this one thing? It must be super-important, and God insists that they are to know this. This one thing has entirely to do with time.

God says, "**one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.**" Immediately we see that God is speaking of this one thing two times. That is, first, He declares, "**one day *is* . . . as a thousand years.**" Then He repeats this information by saying, "**a thousand years as one day.**" This further greatly enhances the importance of the fact that all true believers are to absolutely know that a day is a thousand years.

Remember, Pharaoh dreamed first about seven fat cows that became skinny, and then about seven fat ears of corn that became thin. In connection with this event, God set forth a Biblical principle in Genesis 41:32, where we read:

And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

The law that God sets forth in this verse is that when God doubles a statement, it underscores the absolute truth of it. Whatever will happen is guaranteed to happen, and it will happen soon. Thus, by doubling the statement that one day is as a thousand years, God is telling us that it is extremely important, and it absolutely will soon come to pass.

But how does that relate to the context of II Peter 3, where God speaks of two worldwide judgments, the judgment of Noah's day and the judgment of our day? When we look carefully at the flood account given in Genesis Chapter 7, we find our answer. We must consider the ark, the huge ship that God commanded Noah to build. We read in Genesis 7:1-4:

And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Spiritually, the waters of the flood represented the judgment of God upon the wicked of all the world of Noah's day. The ark represented safety from that judgment, so it represented our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can protect us from judgment. The animals represented the whole creation, which looks to Christ for deliverance from the bondage of corruption (Romans 8:19-23). This will occur when God brings into being the new heavens and the new earth.

Thus, in Genesis 7, God is effectively saying that all of mankind in the whole world have seven days to get into the safety of Christ, who alone can save us from the wrath of God. But wait a minute. Did not God insist in II Peter 3 that we must absolutely know that a day is as a thousand years? Let us substitute 7,000 years for seven days. Therefore, effectively, God was telling Noah that all of mankind who would ever live in the whole world have 7,000 years to get into the safety of Christ, if they are to escape the wrath of God.

What year would be exactly 7,000 years after the flood of Noah's day? Would you believe it! Long ago we learned that the flood occurred in the year 4990 B.C., and 7,000 years later brings us to the year 2011. Remember, we add the Old Testament years to the New Testament years and subtract 1 year, because there is no year zero.

$$4990 + 2011 - 1 = 7,000 \text{ years}$$

Thus, we must understand that God is definitely declaring that He expects that all of the elect of God would absolutely know that the year 2011 is to be the end of the world.

The Final Five Months

But there is more to be said. We have learned that there is a five-month period of time that immediately follows the 8,400-day great tribulation period. What is happening during that time? This final five months that begins on May 21, 2011, is intensely focused on God's salvation plan as well as on His judgment plan. We will discover that on the first day of that five months, which is May 21, 2011, all of the true believers are to be raptured to be forever with Christ. We will also discover it is the day when the judgment of hell begins for all of the unsaved.

In Revelation 9, the Bible speaks of a time when hell will begin on this earth. It encompasses a time of five months (verses 5 and 10). The chapter begins with the words that "**the bottomless pit**" (a synonym for hell), is opened and the smoke as of a great furnace came forth. At that time, those who had been convinced they were saved because they had been teachers and preachers of the Bible, but were not saved, and they had not been raptured, are still trying to teach their wrong understanding of the Bible. They are typified by locusts (verse 3), and are ruled over by Abaddon (destruction) and Apollyon (destroyer) (verse 11), and are hurting those who are living on the earth at that time. However, they are not to hurt those who have the seal of God on their foreheads.

The essence of hell is to receive the payment of eternal destruction, to be destroyed forever. That is why these unsaved people are ruled over by Abaddon and Apollyon (Revelation 9:11), which are names that describe the essence of hell. Because they are in hell during these final five months of hell on earth, it is guaranteed that all of the unsaved will be destroyed forever. They never, never again will be alive. They, as well as the entire universe, will be annihilated. They cannot hurt the true believers who have the seal of God on their foreheads because the true believers are never to experience hell. The true believers will be raptured (caught up into heaven), the moment this final five months of hell on earth begins.

In Revelation 9:4, God declares:

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

In this context, the grass, the green thing, and the trees typify the true believers. In Revelation 15, God emphasizes the last plagues, the final time of hell on earth, and in verse 1 He declares, “**for in them is filled up the wrath of God.**”

The next verse then assures us that at the same time, all the true believers are safe with God on a “**sea of glass.**” We read in Revelation 15:2:

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

The “**sea of glass**” is in heaven, as indicated by Revelation 4:2, “. . . behold, a throne was set in heaven and *one* sat on the throne.” Verse 6 then declares, “**And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal.**”

The true believers will have been raptured on the first day of this final five-month period, so they will completely escape the horrors of that final period of time. Whereas this five-month period will be an enormous horror story for those who have not been raptured, it will be a time of great joy and wonder for those who are raptured.

This period of five months encompasses exactly 153 days, May 21 to October 21. The number 153 spiritually breaks down to 3 x 3 x 17, just as it does when we examined the 153 fish. Spiritually, therefore, it identifies with those for whom it was God’s purpose (3) to take them to heaven (17). The number 3 doubled signifies that God will surely bring it to pass.

More Incredible Information

As further proof that this date, May 21, 2011, is the date of the rapture, we discovered a most significant fact. According to the Biblical ceremonial calendar, May 21, 2011, is the 17th day of the second month. Precisely 7,000 years earlier, on the 17th day of the second month, according to the calendar used by Noah, God shut the door of the ark. We read in Genesis 7:1 and 4:

And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

... For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

And we read in Genesis 7:10 and 11:

And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

And we read in verses 13 and 16:

In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; . . . And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

The calendar of Noah's day was slightly different from the later Biblical calendar in that it had 30 days in a month, whereas the later Biblical calendar had 29 ½ days in a month, as it followed the moon phases. But God, in a remarkable way, tied the time of the shutting of the door of the ark, on the 17th day of the second month, to the shutting of the door on May 21, 2011, which, according to the Biblical ceremonial calendar is the 17th day of the second month. This forever separated the true believers in the ark from all the unsaved who perished outside of the ark. This foreshadowed the fact that on the date in which all the true believers are to be raptured, there never again would be any possibility of salvation for those left behind. Thus, we can know that it is as if there are exactly 7,000 years, to the very day, from the shutting of the door on any further possibility of salvation, both during the worldwide destruction of Noah's day and the worldwide destruction of our day. Can this be coincidental?

Atonement to Rapture: 722,500 Days

God gives us another piece of interesting and significant time information that further demonstrates the accuracy of May 21, 2011, as the date of the rapture. On April 1, 33 A.D., the Lord Jesus was crucified to demonstrate how He paid for the sins of those He came to save. Exactly 722,500 days (inclusively) later, the rapture (May 21, 2011) will occur. This number breaks down into the very significant numbers:

$$(5 \times 10 \times 17) \times (5 \times 10 \times 17) = 722,500$$

We have learned the spiritual meaning of these numbers. The work of the atonement (5) is completed (10) when all of the elect are safely in heaven (17). This wonderful fact is doubled by a repetition of the three numbers, $10 \times 5 \times 17$. This emphasis is, according to Genesis 41:32, “**because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.**”

Can we see how God has tied the time of the rapture on May 21, 2011, to the time when heaven was made possible (the atonement), because when Christ was crucified, He demonstrated how He made the full payment for the sins of those who are to be caught up to heaven to live eternally with Jesus?

At this time in our study, we should pause a moment and consider what we just learned in the preceding paragraphs.

We are very certain that the crucifixion of Christ occurred on the day of the feast of the Passover, which was on a Friday, in A.D. 33, which was the 14th day of the first month of the Biblical ceremonial calendar. We are also very certain that this day was April 1, A.D. 33, according to our modern calendar. It was on that day that Christ demonstrated how He was punished for the sins of all those He came to save. Because He paid for their sins, they were guaranteed to go to heaven to reign with Him forevermore.

From much information given to us in the Bible, we have discovered that on May 21, 2011, all of those who were saved by Jesus’ payment, will realize the completion of their salvation as they are raptured (caught up) into heaven. Therefore, it is very obvious that the dates April 1, A.D. 33, and May 21, 2011, are spiritually very closely linked together.

But we also discover that these two dates, which are almost 2,000 years apart, are also dramatically tied together by the literal number of days that separates them as well as by the spiritual significance of that great number of days.

Look again at the number 722,500. Isn’t it absolutely incredible that it breaks down into exactly two pairs of enormously significant spiritual numbers, 10, 5, and 17? Only God, who created this great universe with all of its precise physical laws, could have designed the timeline of history in such a precise and marvelous way. Please! What is the possibility that these time relationships could be coincidental? The answer has to be, under no circumstance could any of this be coincidental.

More Proofs

We continue to learn other proofs that show that we have arrived at a very precise knowledge of the timing of the end. As we have noted, God further

solidifies or locks in this date, May 21, 2011, by placing the day of shutting the door, when the rapture will occur, on the 17th day of the second month of the Biblical calendar. Significantly, the number 17 links perfectly to the fact of the rapture because spiritually, the number 17 signifies heaven. Moreover, the number 2 (second month) spiritually identifies with those who have been commissioned to bring the Gospel. Is it not amazing that they will be raptured on the 17th day of the second month? Is that coincidental?

We also have learned that the last day of the earth's existence, October 21, 2011, is the 23rd day of the seventh month of the Biblical calendar. The number 23 normally signifies God's wrath being poured out. The number 7 (seventh month) signifies the perfect fulfillment of God's purposes. Could this also be coincidental, that the final completion of God's punishment on the unsaved occurs in the seventh month on a day that features the number 23, which is a number that completely identifies with God's wrath, thus signifying God's perfect wrath on the unsaved?

The precision of the timeline of the end of the world is further emphasized when we examine this final five-month period from the standpoint of God's wrath. When God punished Jesus, when He was showing how He suffered in paying for the sins of the elect, it calls our attention to the fact that some of the punishment for the sins of the non-elect must still occur. These two punishments are tied together by the 1,978 years that separate the time of the cross (A.D. 33) from the time of the end (A.D. 2011).

$$2011 - 33 = 1,978$$

$$1978 = 2 \times 23 \times 43$$

Number 2 symbolizes those who are to bring the Gospel.

Number 23 symbolizes wrath

Number 43 symbolizes judgment

Thus, by the number 1,978, God is emphasizing that judgment will fall on those who had been commissioned to bring the Gospel (2) and are still subject to the wrath of God (23 and 43).

God's Judgment Process Continues While a Great Multitude are Saved

As we carefully examine the dates of the great tribulation, the rapture, and the last day of earth's existence, we discover another interesting fact. We have learned that during the last 6,100 days of the 8,400-day great tribulation

period, the true believers, who will be outside of the churches, are being used of God to bring into the kingdom of God a great multitude, which no man could number. At the same time, all of the church members are being prepared for entrance into the final five-month period when God's final punishment occurs for them. But at the same time, during these final 153 days, all of those who were saved during the previous 6,100 days will be safe in heaven, along with all of those saved throughout time. These 6,100 days, when added to the final 153 days, equal 6,253 days. The number 6,253 breaks down into the significant numbers $13 \times 13 \times 37$.

Number 13 is end of the world

Number 37 is God's judgment

Remember, Noah was in the ark exactly 370 days. Remember, too, the Assyrian army of 185,000 men under Sennacherib was destroyed by God in one night (II Kings 19:35), and $185,000 = 1,000 \times 5 \times 37$. Therefore, we can see how the number 37 identifies with destruction that is a result of God's judgment.

By the number 6,253 God is assuring us that while there is a great multitude that will experience salvation during that period of time, God's judgment process (37) will be complete at the end of the world (13). Again, please note the doubling of the number 13.

Earlier in this study, we established, solely from the Biblical information, the final timing of the end of history in somewhat of a tentative way. However, subsequently, by carefully continuing to apply additional Biblical information, we have discovered that that timeline was exceedingly accurate. Proof after proof has been emphasized. If the timeline presently set forth is inaccurate in any one of its dates, many of the proofs would be invalidated. Certainly if any of the dates we have learned from the Bible are incorrect, then many of the proofs would no longer be known. **We indeed can be certain that the rapture will occur on May 21, 2011, and the final day of the history of the world is October 21, 2011.**

But these are not just intellectual or academic facts. These are truths that apply in a very personal way to every individual (almost seven billion people) presently living on this earth. Is it possible to escape this terrible day of judgment?

Chapter 6. Is there Hope for Me?

The Bible clearly states that the Lord Jesus Christ will come as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10; I Thessalonians 5:2). We have learned that this was to be the understanding throughout the church age. Thus, Bible students and theologians were not to concern themselves with the timing of Christ's return. They were to focus on the immediate task of sending the Gospel into all the world (Acts 1:6-8).

However, we have learned that very near the time of the end of the world, the true believers would know much about the timeline of history (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6; I Thessalonians 5:3-5; Revelation 3:3).

We are at that awesome time of history, and therefore, we have, indeed, been able to determine with great Biblical accuracy the day, the month, and the year of the timing of the end of the world.

Since the end of time is so near, we should be greatly concerned: IS THERE HOPE FOR ME? Indeed, there is great hope for anyone living today. This is so because God positively assures us that at this time in history, a great multitude, which no man could number, is being saved (Revelation 7:9-14). We should, therefore, briefly discuss God's salvation plan.*

In Mark 1:14b-15, Jesus declares God's command to the human race:

... Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

To believe the Gospel as this verse commands means to recognize that the Gospel is from God's mouth. Therefore, it is absolutely true, absolutely important, and absolutely authoritative. It is the law of God, the Bible, that each and every person must obey. Therefore, the person who believes the Gospel should try to be as obedient as possible, insofar as he is able to understand the Bible.

Every person by nature is capable to some degree of doing some spiritual work, including that of believing and obeying the Bible. This is because God's law is written on his heart (Romans 2:14-15), and God has given him a conscience so that he has some sense of morality. Even though he is spiritually dead, both in body and in soul, so that there is no possibility in himself of obtaining spiritual life, he still has, to some degree, the ability to obey the laws

* For a greater in-depth study of God's salvation plan, you are invited to call or write Family Radio to receive, free of charge, the book *I Hope God Will Save Me*. The address is: Family Radio, Oakland, CA 94621. Or you may call: 1-800-543-1495. Our email address is: familyradio@familyradio.org

of God. Each and every person, to some degree, repents, or turns away, from his sins. Therefore, he is able to live a decent moral life. By nature, he is spiritually dead because he is a descendant of Adam, our first parent. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, in principle, the whole human race sinned because we were all in the loins of Adam (I Corinthians 15:22).

However, he has absolutely no ability to become saved, that is, to obtain eternal life in his body or in his soul. This is so because the Gospel indicates that the payment God's law demands for sin is that the sinner is to be punished by a shameful death. Thus, each person who has been sentenced to this shameful death for his sins will never again be alive, and has lost the wonderful inheritance of eternal life. That is why each of us must find someone to be our substitute or stand-in to bear this punishment on our behalf.

This command of Mark 1:15, to believe the Gospel and to repent (to stop sinning and obey the Bible), was given about 2,000 years ago. It declares that "**The time is fulfilled.**" It was at that time that Jesus the Messiah had come to make the payment demanded by the law of God on behalf of all of those He came to save.

Today, the phrase, "the time is fulfilled" is even more applicable to God's salvation plan because we are only a very short time from the complete finish of God's salvation plan. As we study His magnificent salvation plan for the world, we become aware that there are essentially three kinds of people in the world. They are as follows.

1. Those who throughout their lifetime have never heard any words from the Bible.
2. Those who have heard the teachings of the Bible, but who scoff or ridicule the Bible, or come to the Bible with their own preconceived ideas of truth.
3. Those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God and who earnestly and humbly desire salvation, altogether in accordance with Bible truth.

Those Who Have Never Heard

Throughout the history of the world, there are those who have lived and died without ever having heard or read any words from the Bible. And because "**faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God**" (Romans 10:17), we must believe that none of these people were elected by God to become saved. Therefore, it was not necessary for God at any time in their lifetime to place them under the hearing of God's Word.

Those Who Have Heard the Word but Are Scoffers

Ever since God gave the command to repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15), it was God's intention that in the world, as many people as possible might come under the hearing of the Gospel. That is why, about 2,000 years ago, Jesus commanded that all the true believers are to send the Gospel into all the world (Matthew 28:19- 20).

Sadly, the reaction of a great many people who became somewhat acquainted with the Bible was either to scorn and ridicule it, or to follow their own rules rather than the Bible's rules, as they endeavored to understand Biblical truth. Those who ridiculed the Bible were convinced there were errors and contradictions in the Bible, and therefore, they had no desire or need to obey it. Those who came to the Bible with their own man-made method of interpretation, or who had placed their trust in their church or denomination as the ultimate authority, rather than trusting the Bible, they also became obedient to doctrines that were not true to the Bible.

The Bible teaches that unsaved individuals can, to some degree, obey God's laws. This truth explains the false hope of many people. For example, this is true for those who are members of churches that teach the five points of Calvinism, which are derived from the Canons of Dort, an historical creed.* The first point is that we are to believe that before we are saved, we are totally depraved. Because members of these churches live decent, moral lives, and are obedient to the rules of their church, they know they cannot be totally depraved. They have been taught by their confessions that total depravity is the spiritual condition of the unsaved. Therefore, their devout lifestyle and faithfulness to their church, together with the fact that they have been baptized in water and are faithful members of their church, surely proves to them that since they are not totally depraved, therefore, God must have saved them. They fail to realize that the evidence of salvation is an intense desire to be obedient to the whole Bible. Thus, they are trapped in an unsaved condition because of trust in an unbiblical theological conclusion.

Another example might be noted. In many other churches, the key to salvation that is taught is a personal acceptance of Jesus as Savior and water baptism. In these churches, these actions, together with faithfulness to the rules of the church, and living a decent moral life, appear to give them ample assurance of salvation. However, it is a salvation program designed by theologians rather than the correct salvation program given in the Bible, in which the evidence of salvation is an intense, ongoing desire to be faithful to everything in the Bible.

* The Canons of Dort, or creeds, are doctrinal conclusions held by conservative Presbyterian churches and Reformed churches that closely follow the theological conclusions of John Calvin, an outstanding theologian who lived about 400 years ago.

Consequently, the churches of our day that claim they carefully follow all of the teachings of the infallible Word of God, the Bible, are filled with these decent, moral individuals who are members in full communion. These dear people have no idea that they are still under the wrath of God, nor do they see any need to carefully check the teachings of their church to determine if their church is truly faithful to the Bible.

The warning of I Thessalonians 5:2-4 should frighten them. This is so because virtually all of those who are in the churches believe they are secure with Christ, and therefore, they are content to believe that He will come as a thief in the night. I Thessalonians 5:2-4 declares:

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

The sudden destruction can refer only to the day of judgment that is almost here. How awful that these dear people are still subject to the full wrath of God that must come upon anyone who has not become saved.

In many instances, these people are decent, moral people who are very devout and faithful members of a church. However, by coming to the Bible with their preconceived, wrong doctrines, which are taught by their church, effectively, they are not hearing the Word of God. They are hearing, and desire to obey, the wrong doctrines of their church, instead of the teaching of the entire Bible. Without realizing it, they often read the Bible, and then, in their mind, twist Biblical truths to try to make them agree with their own preconceived ideas. Thus, they are not listening to the Bible with a desire to be obedient to it.

The Bible makes many references to this kind of conduct. It constantly warns that such conduct will result in God's full wrath coming upon those who despise His Word in this way. It gives these individuals no encouragement or hope that possibly God might save them. In fact, they themselves see no need of such a hope. They believe they are already saved, or according to their own do-it-yourself salvation plan, they believe they can become saved at any time they desire.

The curious and terrible fact is that God recognizes this kind of spiritual rebellion and usually leaves these people in their rebellion. We read, for example, that Jesus came to Nazareth to preach, and the Bible reports in Mark 6:5-6:

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

While God certainly had the power to cause these people of Nazareth to believe on Him, He is surely emphasizing that people who have no desire to be obedient to all of God's Word are in enormous spiritual danger. God's normal reaction to these kinds of people is declared very clearly, for example, in Jeremiah 26:4-6, where we read:

And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending *them*, but ye have not hearkened; Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Those who Humbly Believe the Bible is to be Obeyed

The Bible speaks of a third kind of people, and they are those who listen to the Bible and earnestly desire to be obedient to it. They believe that the Bible, which is the Gospel, is God's law that is addressed to them. They recognize they are shameful sinners and are in deep trouble with God. They recognize that every word in the Bible is from the mouth of God, and therefore, they must carefully listen to it. They recognize the fact that only God can save them, and even though they should be punished by eternal death because of their sins, they hope that possibly God might have mercy upon them (Luke 18:13). They try to be obedient to all they understand of the Bible, knowing full well that their obedient actions do not contribute in any way to salvation or guarantee that God will save them. They may learn that God is saving a great multitude of people at this time, and because God is merciful, they, too, might possibly become saved.

And so, they beg God for His mercy, knowing that it is only the undeserved mercy of God if they should become saved. In the meanwhile, as they patiently wait upon God (Lamentations 3:26), they try to learn all they can from the Bible, so that they might be as obedient as possible to the law of God.

We cannot know why the attitude of this third group of people is so different from that of the second group. It could be that God is drawing them in preparation to save them. It could be that it is simply a result of the fact that God's law is written on their hearts, and their conscience is warning them of the consequences of sin. The important truth is not why they have this obedient attitude towards the Bible. The important truth is that they have this obedient attitude towards the Bible.

We must remember that anyone, at any time, who obeys any of God's laws is doing spiritual work. But that work can never be a contribution to one's salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation will come only to the elect, and the

business of election is strictly God's business. That is why God can save a baby or a completely mentally disabled person who is under the hearing of the Bible.

In God's mysterious providence, He gives spiritual ears to the elect, who are among those who are physically hearing the Word of God. We read in Matthew 13:9:

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Thus, we can know that God, in this mysterious business of salvation, speaks of people from two contrary aspects. On the one hand, He speaks of those who are physically under the hearing of the Gospel, and who, if they have any ability to even slightly understand the Word of God, will try to be obedient to the Bible. In their obedience, they are praying for God's mercy; they are patiently waiting upon God, hoping that they, too, might become saved. In their desire to be obedient, they are at least in an environment (the Bible) wherein God will save them if God so desires.

On the other hand, God gives great numbers of warnings to those who are under the physical hearing of the Word of God, but who will not listen with a humble desire to obey the Word of God. By their actions, they are effectively indicating they despise the Word of God. God repeatedly warns that such actions, if continued, will end up with the sentence of the full shame, curse, loss of inheritance, and death that are all a part of God's wrath against sin.

This is no time for self-pride, self-ego, self-esteem or even self-respect. It is not a time for spiritual superiority or spiritual arrogance. It is a time when we should fully recognize the complete authority of the Bible over our lives, and therefore, listen most carefully to what God is saying to each of us today.

It is a time when each one should fully realize the shame of his sins, and the certainty that because of his sins, he deserves the full measure of God's wrath. It is a time to humbly plead with God for His undeserved mercy. It is a time when each one of us should realize that God is merciful. His incredible mercy is far greater than any one of us deserves or can possibly imagine.

Today, in His great and wonderful mercy, God is saving a great multitude of people. It is possible, therefore, that as any one of us humbly pleads for mercy, if we are not already saved, we might be one of those included in that great multitude, which no man could number.

THE BIG QUESTION IS: Are you humbly begging God for salvation, knowing full well that you do not deserve it at all, as you consider your shameful disobedience and rebellion against God's laws? Remember the people of Nineveh (Jonah 3:6-10).

MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON EACH ONE OF US!

