

ISRAEL IN PROPHECY

What Does the Bible Say?



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“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Matthew 23:37-38

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In Search of Peace, Part I

By Pastor Aubrey Duncan

Yearning for Peace

Many are concerned about all that is going on in the world today. There are wars, pestilences, unusual weather patterns, economic uncertainty, and moral declension. They wonder, what do all these things mean? People are asking: ‘where’s the world headed? How will it all end? Does anyone have the answers to the world’s problems? Will there ever be peace on earth? Humanity is dismayed and confused.

Russia has invaded Ukraine, Ukrainians are fighting back with all the strength they can muster, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is ravaged by tribal conflict, Armenia and Azerbaijan are at war over disputed territory; and these are just a few. There are more battles in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. All are experiencing profound grief and unbearable suffering. There are significant casualties, destruction of property, and displacement of innocent men, women, and children who have absolutely nothing to do with the wars. They are merely the casualties of war.

Most recently, Hamas attacked Israel. Israel has retaliated with unbridled force, unmitigated wrath and genocidal fury, with no end in sight. To outside observers this situation is a theatrical spectacle that plays

24/7 on news platforms. Commentators regurgitate their respective pre-conceived political and religious biases. But for the Palestinians and Israelis, the suffering, the loss of loved ones, the destruction, and the loss of families and friends are protracted, gut-wrenching episodes of grief and agony. Their experiences are real.

Chris Hedges, noted historian and journalist, puts the ongoing Israeli/Palestinian conflict into its proper context: “The collective retribution against innocents is a familiar tactic employed by colonial rulers. We used it against Native Americans and later in the Philippines and Vietnam. The Germans used it against the Herero and Namaqua in Namibia; the British used it in Kenya and Malaya, the Nazis used it in the areas they occupied in the Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe. Israel follows the same playbook. Death for death, atrocity for atrocity.” But it is always the occupier who initiates this macabre dance and trades piles of corpses for higher piles of corpses.

“What does Israel, or the world community expect? How can you trap 2.3 million people in Gaza, half of whom are unemployed, in one of the most densely populated spots on the planet for 16 years, reduce the lives of its residents, half of whom are children—to a subsistence level, deprive them of basic medical supplies, food, water, and electricity, use attack aircraft, artillery, mechanized units, missiles, naval guns, and infantry units to randomly slaughter unarmed civilians and not expect a violent response? Israel is currently carrying out waves of aerial assaults on Gaza, preparing a ground invasion and has cut the power to Gaza, which usually only operates two to four hours per day.” *“Palestinians Speak the Language of Violence Israel Taught Them,”* chrishedges.substack.com

But how did we get here? There’s an ancient book, disregarded and despised by almost the entire world, that holds the answers. It contains the true history of humanity. The Bible gives profound insights into our current warlike culture and foretells the future of not only the Middle East conflict, but of the rest of the rapidly deteriorating world.

The Truth

This precious, yet despised document records a time when there was no war in the universe. Everything worked in perfect symmetry and with flawless synchronization. The Jewish prophet, Moses, writes about that indomitable masterpiece and its Creator: “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good” Genesis 1:31. Later, the apostle John, a contributor to that ageless, rejected masterpiece, reported on the first war that started in a neighborhood of unspeakable bliss: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the

great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” Revelation 12:7-9.

That war continues today on our plagued planet in the hearts of men and women. The conflicts around the world are manifestations of the war virus that arose in the courts of glory. It has infected every member of the human family and has brought about a seemingly unceasing culture of dispute and dissipation. That war virus is called sin, which is disobedience to our Creator’s will. It had so infected the human family that it brought hurt to our Creator’s heart: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart” Genesis 6:5-6.



This Hebrew Bible, which is 1,100 years old, sold for \$57 million at an auction in New York – ABC News.

That ancient book, whose story is ever true, goes on to tell us that Creator God would eventually destroy His greatest creation, who thoroughly turned away from His revealed desire for them. That destruction came in the form of a great flood that engulfed the entire earth, and all humanity, all except a man named Noah, his wife, his sons, and his sons’ wives. (See Genesis 6-8.)

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But no sooner than God had preserved Noah and his family, the war virus raised its deadly head again. It has traversed the ages, and we are witnessing its most ravaging effects throughout planet earth.

Of all the devastation, the war between Israel and Palestine should be of grave concern to all alive. Its impact and significance are broader and deeper than most realize. The only solution for ending it and all other wars, thereby bringing in universal peace, is intimately connected to both parties. It is not a peace agreement between warring countries. The solution to war, destruction, death, and suffering is neither diplomacy nor genocide. Peace will not be accomplished by the implementation of some grand design for a universal religious or political project.

The only remedy for war and its horrific effects is a person. His entry onto the stage of the Drama of the Ages was announced by angels in

that ancient book: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” Luke 2:10-11, 13-14.

Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah years before His human birth: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” Isaiah 9:6.

Peace will come to the Middle East only when both the Israelis and the Arabs, who are cousins, accept the Prince of Peace. Their age-old conflict is a consequential family dispute that goes back thousands of years, affects us all today, and will last until the Prince of Peace returns to planet earth.

Tragically, He was rejected by the Jewish nation at His first coming. At the time of His entrance into the human experience, the Jews were looking for someone to overthrow their Roman subjugators and deliver them from the oppression and bondage in which they were held. They were then, and still are, looking for an earthly conquering king. But the Prince of Peace decided instead to come as a Suffering Servant and a Slain Lamb. Isaiah foretold: “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” Isaiah 53:7. Deeply moved by His awe-inspiring presence, His cousin John declared: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” John 1:29.

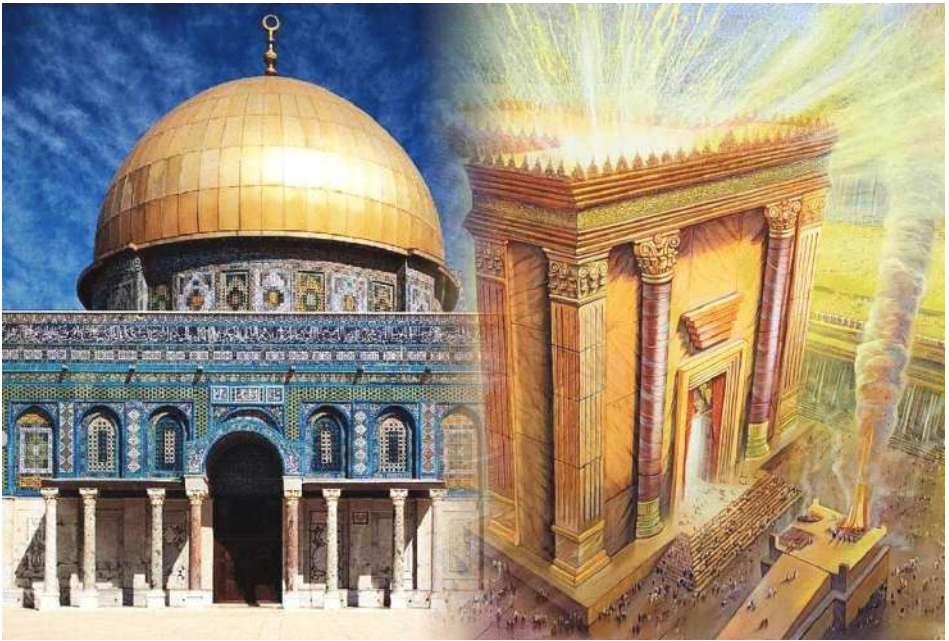
The Jews didn’t accept Him; but rather delivered Him to their Roman oppressors to be crucified on a cruel cross. I often wonder: What would the world be like today had they accepted Him?

On the other hand, their cousins, the Arabs, claim that their god, Allah, does not have a son; therefore, the Prince of Peace is neither the Son of God nor the promised Messiah. They are looking for the Imam Mahadi, whom they believe will appear and fill the earth with fairness, justice, and peace. But Mahadi is not the Prince of Peace and therefore cannot bring them peace.

As Abraham’s children, the Jews and the Arabs, it will do them both well to accept Yeshua, the True Messiah, the only Savior of the world, the Prince of Peace. Only then can peace come to the Middle East.

The Truth vs. the False

We live in a world where life and death have become a game played on the screens of one’s favorite electronic device. What is seen on TV



is accepted as reality. Consequently, rather than accepting the truth of the Bible, which only accurately identifies and predicts the coming of the Prince of Peace, **men and women are constantly concocting fables and calling them fulfillment of Bible prophecy.** They are constantly looking at the events transpiring around the world and attempting to plug their old ladies' tales into them to justify their false theories.

One of the most popular skewed Biblical narratives used for this purpose is that of the Jewish temple being rebuilt in Jerusalem. The war between Israel and Hamas has given rise to this false narrative which has not a thread of Bible truth. The Prince of Peace, in response to the Jews rejection of Him, with teary eyes, agonizingly declared: **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”** Matthew 23:37-38.

There is no indication of Him returning to a rebuilt temple. In fact, He went further in prophesying the temple's demise: “Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” Matthew 24:2. That pronouncement was precisely fulfilled less than a generation later. Ironically, the very ones who propagate this spurious narrative of a rebuilt Jewish temple reject the foundational tenet of the Jewish religion: **the seventh-day Sabbath.** How does their Sunday sacredness theory reconcile with God's Holy Sabbath which the Jews tenaciously embrace as part of their national identity?

The Secret Rapture

Another popular fable is the secret rapture. This widely accepted fib suggests that soon Christians will be removed from the earth and taken to heaven, leaving the rest of humanity to go through a great tribulation. Ironically, the ones that proclaim this fairy tale are the very ones who are striving desperately to establish God's kingdom on earth which they claim will be a time of bliss for one thousand years (the millennium). How one can reconcile a secret rapture, a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and a millennium of peace on earth is quite puzzling. According to the Bible, the pieces simply do not fit together.

The source of these theories is a phenomenally successful fiction series called "Left Behind" by authors Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. **The fact that the authors made it specifically clear their work is fictitious is of no consequence to its adherents who accept it as Bible truth. But popularity does not equate to truth.**

The purpose of true Bible prophecy is to reveal the coming of the Prince of Peace in power and glory to redeem only those who have accepted Him as Lord and Savior. Any biblical narrative that does not present that fact is false and must be rejected.

Thankfully, we have the words of our Creator who offers these words of comfort through His servant, John: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" Revelation 21:1-4.

Can you imagine? "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord" Isaiah 65:25. This is the sure promise of the Prince of Peace.

Jesus Christ, the Creator of the world and the true Prince of Peace can be trusted when He assures us He will come again to rescue humanity from this world of sin, perplexity, and woe. We can have faith in His Word when He promises to make all things new. To date, everything He promised and that which had been prophesied about Him, by the prophets of old, have come to pass exactly as was foretold. When and where He would be born, the precise period He would do His ministry on earth, how, when, and where He would die, the time of His resurrection from the grave; all have been fulfilled with uncanny accuracy.

The angels joined the chorus, singing and announcing the coming of the Prince of Peace. As Jesus completed the work appointed to Him here on earth and began to make His way back to the heavenly Father, the angels confirmed the return of the Prince of Peace. Doctor Luke left us with this account: “And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” Acts 1:10-11.

The Coming Prince of Peace

The coming of the Prince of Peace is the overarching theme of the Bible. It's a divine chain of truth that stretches as an unbroken cord from the first book of God's Holy Word to the final words of the Sacred Record. The patriarch Job, in the most despicable of human conditions, having lost every earthly possession, deprived of family and health, exclaimed most positively: “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me” Job 19:25-27.

The promise of that glorious appearing of the Prince of Peace was not lost on His beloved disciple John. He declared: “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen” Revelation 1:7.

With such a clear record of the manner in which the Prince of Peace will come, no one needs to be deceived. But how certain can we be of His coming? Considering the evidence of all the other events prophesied about Him and fulfilled in His life, you can be confident that indeed this final event, His return, will be likewise fulfilled, just as prophesied.

Again, His servant Paul, not only foretold the manner of the coming of the Prince of Peace, as the beloved John had declared, but he spoke with assurance of the most glorious event to take place in human history: “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.

The prophet Isaiah exclaimed: “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the re-

buke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it” Isaiah 25:8. He continued: “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” Isaiah 26:19.

Not only by men and angels, but most assuredly, we have the assurance of the One who cannot lie, the Prince of Peace Himself. Addressing His troubled disciples on the night before He gave His life to ransom and reunite our lost world back to our heavenly Father, He offered these words of assurance, comfort and compassion: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” John 14:1-3. That promise is as sure for us today as it was for His disciples nearly two thousand years ago.

When that day comes, the entire world will be divided into two classes. One class is described thus: “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? Revelation 6:15-17.

But, **the other class, the one I pray that you and I will be in, will look up, face to face with our Savior, and joyfully declare, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation”** Isaiah 25:9. He shall then respond with the most melodious voice ever heard in human ears, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” Matthew 25:34. I plan on being in that class. What about you?

But for now, He has given us a very special gift: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” John 14:27. He beckons us: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” Matthew 11:28-30. How will we respond? Will the Jews, Palestinians, and other warring factions accept this invitation?

Looking for peace? In Him, the Prince of Peace, is the only place we will find it.

<http://adventmessenger.org/in-search-for-peace/>



In Search of Peace, Part II

A Most Solemn Warning

In one of His last discourses with His disciples before His crucifixion, Jesus prophesied the events that would take place just prior to His return to planet earth. When asked by His closest companions what would be the signs of His return, the Savior responded, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” Matthew 24:4-5.

He proceeded to talk about all the signs we find so easy to identify with: pestilences, disturbances in the natural elements, and strife between tribes and nations. But, as if He wanted us to focus on the greatest sign of all, He reiterated: “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” Matthew 24:11. He reemphasized: “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” Matthew 24:24.

The apostle Paul, confirming the Savior’s admonitions, warned: “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” 2 Corinthians 11:13–15. As certainly as was foretold by the Messiah and corroborated by His servant Paul,

deception is rampant in the world.

Deception, by its very nature, is dangerous and deadly. Simply put, deception is sincerely believing something to be true when, in fact, it is patently false. Such is the popular notion of the “Seven-Year Tribulation” which occurs after the “Secret Rapture.” Neither of these concepts can be found anywhere in the Holy Scriptures. But where did they come from, and why are they so popular? The answer to those questions is that, sadly, **an overwhelming majority of people who identify as Christians do not study the Bible for themselves.** Rather, they parrot the ideas of popular charismatic teachers who themselves have a perverse understanding of God’s plan of redemption and the Holy Bible, which reveals it.

Their understanding of and reaction to the current Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine reveals that. **The current situation is more political than prophetic.** To best understand the middle east crisis and the “Seven Year Tribulation” theory to which it is connected, one must go primarily to recent secular history rather than heeding popular prophetic utterances.

Examining the Root

Zionism, the Jewish nationalist movement, has had as its goal, the creation and support of a Jewish national state in Palestine, the ancient homeland of the Hebrews. Sources abound, often conflicting, on the origin of the Zionists. Some argue that it originated in eastern and central Europe in the latter part of the 19th century. Others claim that Zionists are the descendants of the Khazars. These warring people ruled an empire encompassing sections of modern European Russia, Southern Ukraine, Crimea, and Kazakhstan until it was overcome by Russian and Byzantine forces in the latter part of the tenth century.

What is not in doubt, however, is the Zionists’ belief, which has indoctrinated almost the entire world with the idea that Zionism is a continuation of the Biblical narrative of the Hebrew nation and religion. Their fervent claim is that they are descended from the historical region of Palestine, where one of the hills of ancient Jerusalem was called Zion. Their determined plan is to reclaim it at any cost necessary.

Whatever their origin, Zionists settled in Europe, primarily Austria, England, and Germany, with a significant number in the United States. As a movement, the Zionists managed to accumulate enormous wealth and powerful political influence wherever they settled. Their astute financial acumen is felt primarily in the areas of banking and the media around the world.

Then came the First World War. England, France, and Russia were fighting against Germany and its confederates. The Zionist presence was significant in all those regions. England and its allies were losing to

Germany and its allies. The United States was not originally involved, holding a policy of neutrality. The crisis provided the platform for the advancement of the prevailing Zionist narrative on the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

The now very well established and financially powerful Zionists persuaded, some say blackmailed, the United States under the presidency of Woodrow Wilson to enter the war on the side of England. America

Foreign Office,

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Y. W.
Arthur Balfour

intervened, and as a consequence, the British prevailed. The Zionists now demanded their payback from the English for having America come to their rescue. The price: support for the establishment of the “Nation of Israel” in the land of Palestine. England’s acquiescence came in the form of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917.

This document was a public statement issued by the British government announcing its support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, then an Ottoman region with a small minority Jewish population. The declaration was contained in a letter from the United Kingdom’s Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Zionist community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. It’s the basis upon which the Zionists were patriated to Palestine, igniting the bloody confrontation that started in 1948 and continues today with Israel and Hamas.

Connecting Grand Ambitions with Deceptive Biblical Theories

The Seven Year Tribulation theory is intricately entwined with the Zionists’ narrative of having established themselves as the custodians of the ancient Hebrew faith and rightful owners of the land of Palestine if they have the right to reclaim that territory, even to the extent of genocide of its current occupants. **Its source is not the Bible, as so many are deceived into believing, but the same from which all false teachings of Christendom originate: the Roman Catholic Church.**

The Protestant Reformation of the 15th and 16th centuries, dealt a severe blow to the power of the Roman Papacy. In response, the Council of Trent was commissioned and deliberated between 1545 and 1563. High on the agenda was the need to counter the inroads of this God-inspired, Bible-believing movement. As part of the church’s Counter-Reformation efforts, the Jesuit Order was established in 1540 with the main objective of stamping out the light that was being brought to the princes and masses of Europe by the Protestant reformers, such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, and others.

Two outstanding Jesuit scholars were charged with negating the claim of the Reformers—that the papacy is the antichrist power of Bible prophecy. One of them, Louis de Alcazar, developed the doctrine of Preterism, postulating that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, which undeniably identify the Roman Papacy as the antichrist, be relegated to the first century of the Christian era. The other Jesuit scholar, Francisco Ribera, generated the concept of Futurism, an idea placing the coming antichrist as someone arriving on the world stage sometime in the distant, unknown future. Together, Preterism and Futurism, in the minds of their adherents, shielded the papacy from the clear revelation of God’s word which reveals its role in salvation history.

Futurism, unlike its twin sister Preterism, has captivated the minds of most of Christendom and continues to accomplish its purpose of taking the focus away from the Biblically revealed anti-Christian entity of the Apocalypse. Ribera's clever misapplication of the final verses of the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel remains the foundational teaching of end-time prophecies in most Christian schools. Therefore, it has become the belief of the masses, who, not studying the Bible for themselves, are instructed by the graduates of those institutions.

Following Ribera, numerous Roman Catholic scholars continued to advance this teaching. Cardinal Robert Bellarmine of Rome further embellished and advanced this heresy during the late 1580s and early 1590s. It soon became widespread throughout the Catholic empire and finally found its way into the psyche of Christendom world-wide, particularly here in America.

The famous Texas attorney turned theologian, Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, was largely responsible for spreading the false doctrine of Futurism across the United States through his very popular Scofield Study Bible. He inherited the doctrine of the Seven Year Tribulation from John Nelson Darby, an influential English pastor who visited the United States and taught Futurism across America in the mid-to-late 1800's.

Then came Hal Lindsey and his popular fictitious account of end-time events entitled "The Late Great Planet Earth." The sensational and commercially successful "Left Behind" books and movies have adopted this abomination and taken it to an unbelievably high level of acceptance and reverence among Christians, leaders, and laymen alike. These vehicles, rather than sharing Bible truth, are serving to bring the "separated brethren" back to the fold of the "mother church," Rome. Their effects are evident in the papal-inspired ecumenical movement.

The Seven Year Tribulation theory, the bedrock of futurism, centers on the last four verses of the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, where the prophet foretold the prophetic ministry and death of Jesus Christ. **Daniel also prophesied of the anti-Christian power that would be in existence from the days of the early church until Jesus' second coming.** He writes:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and

the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” Daniel 9:24–27.

It is almost universally agreed that the seventy weeks mentioned in this passage of Scripture (verse 24) are referring to 490 years based on the year/day principle found throughout the Bible (Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6). It is also generally agreed, and correctly so, that Jesus began His Messianic ministry at the end of the 69th week (483 years) of the prophecy (verse 25).

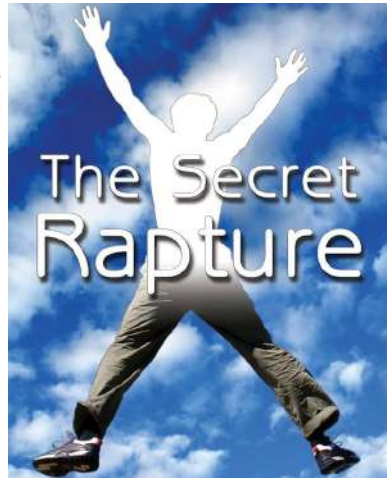
The Seven Year Tribulation theory can better be called The Seven Year Deception, for it takes the final 70th week (seven years) of Daniel’s prophecy and places it sometime in the unknown future (Daniel 9:26). Nowhere else in the Bible, nor in the corridors of human history, nor in the vast expanse of space and limitless time does such a concept exist. It is patently unrealistic and irrational to take a specified period of time, cut out a portion of it, and then reconnect it at some later date. That’s like saying I am 50 years old today but will not be 51 until some undetermined time in the future. The reckoning of time has always been continuous.

Expansive Old Ladies’ Fables

The Seven Year Deception has been enhanced to include the Secret Rapture, a millennium of peace on earth, a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, the reinstatement of animal sacrifices, and the antichrist making a covenant for seven years with the Jews, then breaking it after 3½ years. No such revelations are given in the Word of Almighty God.

Jesus educates us on the nature of His return to planet earth: “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” Matthew 24:30–31.

Paul confirms: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with



a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the **trump** of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. **There is no secret rapture here. Just when was the last time you heard the sound of a secret trumpet?**

This brings us to the falsity of a millennium of peace on earth. We just saw very clearly what happens when Jesus returns. He will raise the righteous dead, and together with the transformed righteous living, transport them to His heavenly courts. John the Revelator elaborates: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” Revelation 20:4. **Clearly, not on earth but in heaven.**

So much for the righteous. But what about the wicked? Paul and John both explain: “Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming...But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 20:5.

How plainer can it be? And how can so many be deceived by this plain teaching of the Scriptures? Jesus knew well what He was warning against. The righteous have been taken to heaven; the wicked are destroyed by the brightness of His coming (Revelation 6:15-16). Then the earth will be desolate for 1000 years.

The apostle Paul rightly identifies the antichrist and his work in the temple of God. It's not a physical temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, but rather the body of Christ, His church: “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” 2 Corinthians 6:16.

He further warns: “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. For those that are awaiting the secret rapture, a millennium of peace on earth, and a rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem, Paul has a warning: “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” 2

Thessalonians 2:10-12.

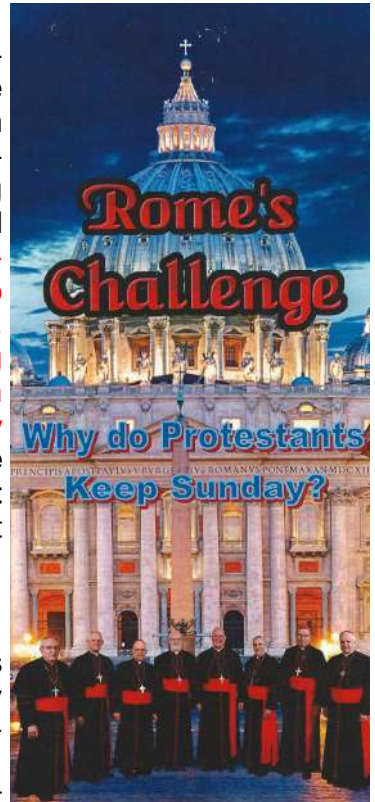
While The Seven Year Deception proponents are looking for **the antichrist** to make and break some covenant with the Jews in their rebuilt temple, he is dwelling comfortably amongst and quite easily deceiving those claiming to be God's people (Daniel 7:25). **He is demanding that he be worshipped as God. He claims the right to change God's holy Sabbath day to Sunday. He's offering salvation in sin. He's denying that Jesus is the Only Mediator between God and man. He opposes the one and only sacrifice for the human race. Innumerable souls are deceived—the very thing that Jesus so passionately warned about.** But we don't have to be deceived.

The Truth

Jesus confirmed the covenant exactly as Daniel prophesied (Daniel 9:27, previously quoted). In order for a covenant to be confirmed, it must have been in place already. The covenant referred to by Daniel is not some agreement made between the Jewish nation and a yet-to-appear antichrist. Rather, Daniel is referring to the everlasting covenant made by the God of Creation after our first parents fell into sin. It was His promise that a Redeemer would be sent to rescue, ransom, and restore fallen humanity back to their Creator (Genesis 3:15). This was the message of the ancient sacrificial system that Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist recognized: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" John 1:29.

Jesus declared in His inaugural sermon: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" Luke 4:18. Mark affirmed: "Now after that John was put in prison, 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" Mark 1:14-15. God's covenant was confirmed.

Messiah did come as Daniel prophesied, ministered for 3½ years to the middle of the prophetic week, and was indeed cut off, hung on the cross (Daniel 9:27). His ministry was for the entire human race, but was



at first—for the Jewish nation. He instructed His disciples as He sent them out on their missionary journey: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” Matthew 10:5-6. Not until 3½ years later, the last half of the 70th week Daniel 9:27), with the stoning of Stephen, the Jews’ final rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, and the conversion of the apostle Paul, did the gospel begin to spread to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). The seventy weeks, the 490 years of Daniel 9:24, were determined upon the Jewish nation and thus completed. God’s plan was to take His message of human redemption to the entire world through the Jewish nation (Isaiah 49:6).

Proponents of The Seven Year Deception look at the unfolding of world events, then try to apply them to their preconceived notions of the Apocalypse. Over the years, their yet-to-appear anti-Christ has shifted from former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to Kofi Anan, former General Secretary of the United Nations, to former President George W. Bush; then they thought they found the perfect candidate, former President Barak Obama. Only God knows who they will choose next.

This false theory, which mentions nothing about Jesus, the pillar and chief personality of end-time prophecy, constitutes the foundation upon which religious leaders and their followers support Israel’s genocide of the Palestinians. Regardless of the abundant financial, mighty military, propagandist media, and fervent evangelical support, acts of genocidal proportions will not lead to the liberation of Israel, the rebuilding of their temple, or a millennium of peace on earth. More likely than not, it will engender devastation like we have never seen. In such a moment, the true antichrist will be revealed as he offers his solution for the end of the crisis and world peace. This will be an infinitely greater deception than The Seven-Year Deception.

God’s covenant with the fallen race is all about Jesus Christ and not about the restoration of a temple in Jerusalem. We must be looking for the New Jerusalem and not at a political movement that promises to rebuild a temple in the land of Palestine: “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” Revelation 21:2-4.

Don’t be deceived!

<http://adventmessenger.org/israel-hamas-and-the-seven-year-deception-are-you-deceived/>



The Promises to Israel Based on the Covenant

All of God's dealings with the Israelites in the Old Testament were based on the covenant that had originally been ratified between God and Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18; 17:2-7). At Mount Sinai, more than four centuries later, Israel took an oath of allegiance to God, accepting Him as their sovereign and becoming, in a special sense, subjects of His authority (Ex 19:5-8; 24:3-8; Deut 7:6-14). This covenant continued in force until the leaders of the nation formally rejected Jesus as the Messiah and declared before Pilate their allegiance to "no king but Caesar" (Mt 21:43-45; 23:36-38).

Under the covenant relationship, the people of Israel pledged themselves to obey God (Ex 19:1-8; 24:3-8), and He, on His part, promised to give them the land of Palestine as their inheritance (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7-8) and to endow them with unique physical, intellectual, and material blessings designed to render them the greatest nation upon the face of the earth. Among these covenant blessings were health, vigor, and immunity to sickness and disease (Ex 15:26; Deut 7:12-15); superior mental acuity and sound judgment (Deut 4:6); skill in the cultivation of the soil that would gradually restore their land to the fertility and beauty of Eden, and bring prosperity to their flocks and herds (Deut 7:13; 28:3-5, 8, 12; Is 51:3; Mal 3:10-11). As a result of obedience Israel would enjoy unparalleled prosperity and reach the highest standard

of living of any nation (Deut 8:18; 28:11-13), and become the greatest nation on the face of the earth (Deut 4:6-8; 7:14; 28:1-2, 10, 13; Jer 33:9; Mal 3:12). All of these blessings were predicated on Israel's wholehearted cooperation with the revealed will of God, and to their best effort, He would add heaven's richest blessings (Deut 4:9; 28:1, 13-14; 30:9-10). Israel was thus to be a living example and a witness to the world of the infinite superiority of the worship and service of the true God (Deut 4:6-9; 7:12-15; 28:1-13; Is 49:3, 6; 61:9; 62:1-2), and one by one, the nations would unite with Israel in serving Him (Is 2:2-3; 11:10; 14:1; 19:18-22; 45:14; 55:5; 56:6-7; 60:1-12; Jer 3:17; 16:19; 33:9; Zech 2:11; 8:20-23).

As a result of apostasy, Israel forfeited possession of the land of Canaan, which was theirs only by virtue of obedience to the covenant relationship, and spent 70 years as captives in Babylon (2 Chr 36:14-17; Is 5:1-7; Jer 25:5-7; 29:18-19; 32:21-23; Eze 7:2-9; 12:3-28; 20:28, 35-38; 21:25-32; 36:18-23; Micah 2:10; Hos 9:3, 15), where they were to learn in adversity the lessons they had failed to learn during times of prosperity (Jer 25:5-7; 46:28; Eze 20:35-38).

Restoration After the Exile

After the captivity, God renewed His covenant with Israel, restored them to their own land, and promised that all the covenant promises might yet come to pass if they would be loyal and obedient to Him (Jer 31:3-38; 33:3-26; Eze 36:8-11, 21-38; 43:10-11; Micah 4:8-12; Zech 1:17; 2:12; 6:15; 10:6). It is significant that all OT promises looking forward to a time of restoration for

the Jews as the covenant people anticipated their return from Babylonian captivity (Is 14:1-7; 27:12-13; Jer 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 25:11; 29:10-14; 30:3-12; 32:37-44; Eze 34:11-16; 37; Amos 9; Micah 2:12-13).



A probationary period of 490 years was allotted to Israel in which to measure up to God's purpose for them as a nation (Dan 9:24-27; Jer 12:14-17). This period of time was to culminate with the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom.

The Kingdom Forfeited in the Rejection of the Messiah

At the time appointed, Messiah came, but His own people "received Him not" (Jn 1:11). Three days prior to the crucifixion, Christ pronounced heaven's verdict upon the Jewish nation: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."



"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Mt 21:43; 23:38).

The Babylonian captivity did not mark "a full end" of Israel's role as the covenant people (Jer

4:27; 5:18; 46:28), but when the Jews rejected their Messiah, there was no assurance of reinstatement; this rejection was permanent and irrevocable (Jer 12:14-17).

The Kingdom Transferred

With the irrevocable rejection of Israel as the covenant people at the cross [where their Messiah hung], the rights, privileges, promises, and blessings of the covenant relationship passed to the Christian church as God's chosen representative on earth (Mt 28:19-20; 2 Cor 5:18-20; Acts 10:34-35; Gal 3:9, 27-29; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Rom 9:24-26, 30-31; 10:12-13). Like everyone else, individual Jews could still find salvation, but they must do so as believers in Christ and not as descendants of Abraham (Rom 9:6; 11:1-2, 11, 15, 22-26). NT writers often reinterpret OT prophecies originally addressed to literal Israel, in terms of the new historical situation, applying them to the church (Acts 2:17-21; 15:15-17; Rom 9:25-29; 1 Cor 9:9-10; Gal 3:11, 16; 4:22-31; Heb 4:1-10; 8:8-12; 1 Pe 2:9-10). Many OT prophecies—such as those affirming Israel's worldwide mission and the ingathering of the Gentiles, and those pointing forward to the eternal rest in Canaan—never were, and now—never can be, fulfilled to Israel as a nation.

The concept that the covenant promises must be fulfilled to literal Israel is based on a misconception of the conditional nature of prophecy. Since the Jews forfeited their special status as the covenant people, there is no valid Scriptural basis for relating the present-day return of the Jews to Palestine, and the modern State of Israel, to the OT covenant promises.

Fulfillment Under the New Testament

After the transfer of the covenant relationship to the church, many OT promises not already fulfilled to literal Israel, would never be fulfilled because they were **strictly conditional** upon Israel's retaining its status as the covenant people. Others would be fulfilled to the Christian church, as spiritual Israel, in principle—but not necessarily in detail—because of the fact that many details of the prophecies were made with respect to Israel as a literal nation, situated in the land of Palestine, whereas **the Christian church is a spiritual "nation" scattered all over the world**. Obviously, such details cannot apply to the church, at least in a literal sense.

Inasmuch as all the OT promises originally applied to literal Israel, it is only when a later inspired writer applies them to the new historical situation, in which **the church is God's chosen instrument**, that we can be positive of the validity of this application. Details that depended upon the Jews continuing as God's chosen people in the land of Palestine have lapsed by default. To lift selected passages out of their literary and historical context in the OT and apply them arbitrarily to our day is not a valid exegesis.

In summary: **the OT prophecies concerning Israel constitute a declaration of God's purpose with respect to the Jews as the cove-**



nant people; these prophecies were strictly conditional upon their cooperation and obedience; by rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, the Jewish nation withdrew from the covenant relationship and forfeited its special relationship to God under the covenant; the covenant promises and privileges were permanently transferred to the Christian church as the new covenant people, to be fulfilled to the extent that they are applicable under the new historical situation; details dependent on literal Israel retaining its status as the covenant people, resident in Palestine, have lapsed by default; we are dependent upon later inspired writers for a valid application of these OT predictions to the church.

This Bible study is adapted from the *SDA Bible Commentary Encyclopedia*, pp. 685-686, vol. 10, 1976 edition. Also 1966 edition, pp. 614-616. Emphasis supplied by NLM.



Will Christians Escape Tribulation?

By Corrie Ten Boom

The world is deathly ill. It is dying. The Great Physician has already signed the death certificate. Yet there is still a great work for Christians to do. They are to be streams of living water, channels of mercy to those who are still in the world. It is possible for them to do this because they are overcomers. Christians are to be ambassadors for Christ. They are to be representatives from Heaven to this dying world. And because of our presence here, things will change.

My sister, Betsy, and I were in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck because we committed the crime of loving Jews. Seven hundred of us from Holland, France, Russia, Poland, and Belgium were herded into a room built for two hundred. As far as I knew, Betsy and I were the only two representatives of Heaven in that room.

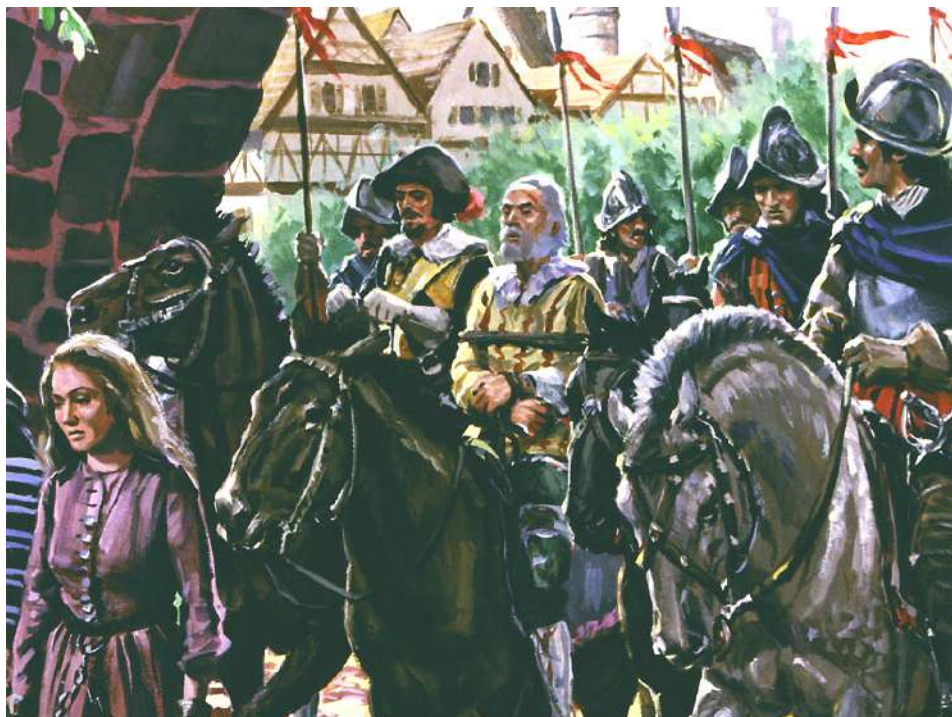
We may have been the Lord's only representatives in that place of hatred, yet because of our presence, things changed. Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" John 16:33. We too, are to be overcomers—bringing the light of Jesus into a world filled with darkness and hate.

Sometimes I get frightened as I read the Bible, and as I look in this world and see all of the tribulation and persecution promised by the Bible, coming true. Now I can tell you, if you too, are afraid, I have read the last pages of Revelation. I can now shout, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

for I have found where it is written that Jesus said, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” Revelation 21:7. This is the future and hope for this world. Not that the world will survive—but that we shall be overcomers in the midst of a dying world.

Betsy and I, in the concentration camp, prayed that God would heal Betsy, who was so weak and sick. “Yes, the Lord will heal me,” Betsy said with confidence. [Yes, God would heal Betsy; if not at that time, then at the resurrection.] She died the next day, and I could not understand it. They laid her thin body on the concrete floor along with all the other corpses of the women who died that day. It was hard for me to understand at the time, but God had a purpose in all of this. And because of Betsy’s death, today I am traveling all over the world telling people about Jesus.

There are some among us teaching that there will be no tribulation—that Christians will be able to escape all the evil that is to come upon the world. **The Bible says, “For [there] shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” Matthew 24:21. Those who teach such things are the false teachers that Jesus warned us to expect in the latter days.** “For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” Matthew 24:24. Most of them have little



knowledge of what is already going on around the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution.

In China, the Christians were told, “Don’t worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated—raptured.” Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a bishop from China sadly say, “We failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first and take us away. Please tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when tribulation comes—to stand and not faint.”

I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than sixty percent of the body of Christ around the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it. **Our time is coming soon!**

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus’ sake, and since I met the bishop in China, every time I read a good Bible text, I think, “I can use this verse in the time of tribulation.” I write it down and learn it by heart.

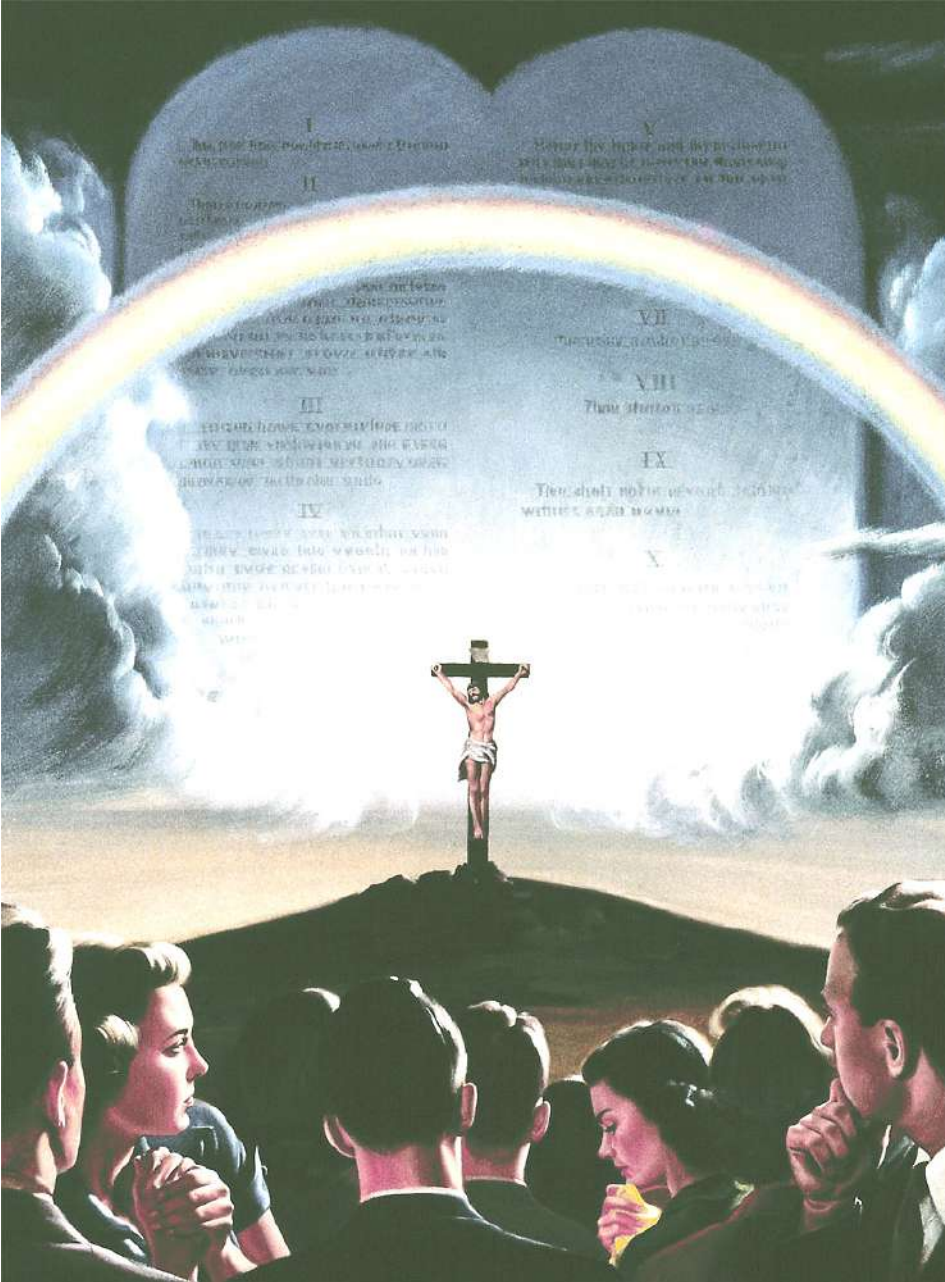
When I was in the concentration camp, a camp where only twenty percent of the women came out alive, we tried to cheer each other up by saying, “Nothing could be any worse than today.” But we would find the next day was even worse. During this time, a Bible verse that I had committed to memory gave me great hope and joy: “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing” 1 Peter 3:12-17.

I found myself saying, “Hallelujah! I am suffering; therefore, Jesus is glorified.”

In America, the churches sing, “Let the congregation escape tribulation,” but in China, Africa, the Middle East, and in most communist countries, tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone [1973], more than two hundred thousand Christians were martyred in Africa. Now, things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice

clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue right on as though we are all going to escape tribulation.

Several years ago, I was in Africa in a nation where a new government had come into power. The first night I was there, some of the Christians were commanded to come to the police station to register.



When they arrived, they were arrested, and that same night, they were executed. The next day, the same thing happened with more Christians. The third day, it was the same. All the Christians in that district were being systematically murdered.

The fourth day, I was to speak in a little church. The people came, but they were filled with fear and tension. All during the service, they were looking at each other, their eyes asking, "Will this one I am sitting beside be the next one killed? Will I be the next one?"

The room was hot and stuffy with insects that came through the screenless windows and swirled around the naked bulbs over the bare wooden benches. I told them a story out of my childhood.

"When I was a little girl, I went to my father and said, 'Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.' 'Tell me,' said my father, 'when you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?'

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train.' 'That is right, and so it is with God's strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need – just in time.'"

My African friends were nodding and smiling. Suddenly, a spirit of joy descended upon that church, and the people began singing, "In the sweet, by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore."

Later that week, half the congregation of that church was executed. Then I heard that the other half was killed some months ago. But I must tell you something, I was so happy the Lord used me to encourage those people, for unlike many of their leaders, I read the Word of God. I read the Bible and discovered that Jesus said He had not only overcome the world,

but to all those who remained faithful to the end, He would give a crown of life. [Revelation 12:10.] How can we get ready for persecution?

First, we need to feed upon the Word of God, digest it; make it part of our being. This will mean disciplined Bible



study each day, as we not only memorize long passages of Scripture, but put the principles to work in our lives.

Next, we need to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; not just the Jesus of yesterday—the Jesus of history—but the life-changing Jesus of today who is still alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is not an optional command of the Bible; it is absolutely necessary. The disciples of Jesus could never have stood up under the persecution of the Jews and the Romans had they not waited for Pentecost. [Acts 2.] Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We will never be able to stand in the tribulation without it.

In the coming persecution, we must be ready to help each other and encourage each other. We must not wait until the tribulation comes before starting. The fruit of the Spirit should be the dominant force of every Christian's life.

Many are fearful of the coming tribulation; they want to run. I, too, am a little bit afraid when I think that after all my 80 years, including the horrible Nazi concentration camps, that I might have to go through the tribulation again. But then I read the Bible and I am glad: "For when I am weak, then am I strong" 2 Corinthians 12:10.

Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord, we were so weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit was with us. That mighty inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit helped us through. No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will never forsake us. Matthew 28:20 says: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, **I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**" For seventy-six years, I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me, or let me down.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" Job 13:15. I know that all who overcome and are faithful unto death, He will give to them, a crown of life. [Rev. 2:10.] Hallelujah!

Adapted from a talk given by Corrie Ten Boom in 1974.



Peacemakers

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” Matthew 5:9.

Christ is “the Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. **He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable.** Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

Christ’s followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

And “blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveals to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. “Everyone that loveth is born of God.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;” but “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” 1 John 4:7; Romans 8:9, 14.

“And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men” Micah 5:7.

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 27-28: Ellen G White.



The Final Dispensation

Much of the world today sits on the precipice of major regional and potentially global war, all because of a misunderstanding of Bible prophecy. The longest timeline prophecy in the Bible, which began in the days of Israel after their exile to Babylon, was Daniel's vision of the 2,300 evenings and mornings (Daniel 8:14). According to Ezekiel 4:6, a prophetic day equals a literal year, so this prophecy stretches over more than two millennia. The first part of that prophecy is what is called "the 70 weeks" prophecy, and is clearly dedicated to the nation of Israel. These prophecies have captured the interest of people through the years, and right now, they have great relevance to us today.

A misunderstanding of what happens during the seventieth week, the last seven years of that 490-year prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27), is at the heart of all the confusion. The modern evangelical world believes the last seven years of this prophecy is about the antichrist and the reinstatement of Israel on the face of the planet. They believe that:

- at the beginning of those last seven years, the church disappears in a secret rapture
- the temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will be reinstated
- the antichrist will appear in the temple and end those sacrifices
- the Jewish nation will be converted and will begin to evangelize the world
- God's one thousand year kingdom (Revelation 20) will be established here on planet earth and begin at the end of those seven years.

However, the 70th week of the 490-year prophecy is not about the antichrist. The 70th week is really about the coming of Jesus Himself, to try to put His family back together so the promises made to Abraham and David and all the faithful in their lineage would finally be fulfilled.

Not only is America confused in regard to this amazing prophecy in Daniel 8 and 9, but the Jewish people themselves have a desire to rebuild their temple, which is one of the things they predict will happen during this final dispensation. For this reason, the devil might actually be allowed to pull off some of these things in order to deceive the people.

Think about it for a moment. There will not be a secret rapture; Jesus will not allow that to happen (see Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16), but of the five things predicted in dispensationalism, suppose that just one of them did come true. The prediction with the greatest likelihood of coming true is that the temple might actually be built. Many want it to happen, both Jews and Evangelicals.

However, even if a temple is built, their timeline for dispensationalism has already been blown out of the water.

- In 1948, the nation of Israel was reestablished.
- By 1981 the secret rapture should have happened, the temple should already have been rebuilt, and animal sacrifices should have resumed.
- Three and a half years after that, the antichrist should have sat on the throne in the temple and stopped the animal sacrifices.
- By 1988, the millennium of peace should have begun.

Let's just say the temple is still going to be rebuilt and an animal is sacri-

ficed. The Bible says the devil will make fire come down from heaven (Revelation 13:13); maybe the fire will come down and consume that sacrifice. Such an act would look like the power of God on Mt. Carmel! As people of the Book, we need to be studying and know the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Otherwise, we will be deceived by our own eyes if our minds don't know the Word of God.

As I already mentioned, dispensational teachers have made five predictions that have failed:

- First, they believed the rapture would happen by 1981, with a visible return by 1988.
- Second, a Roman antichrist would rise out of the ten nations of Europe. Although antichrist is Roman, it is not an individual, as they teach, but a system.
- Third is that the temple was to be built before the tribulation. This has not happened; but even if it does happen, it is not a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.
- Fourth is the invasion of Israel by an Arab/African confederacy. That has not happened.
- Finally, North Africa, with the help of Russia, would become solidly pro-soviet.

All five of these predictions have failed, although one of them may still be attempted. They are the failures of a belief system which taught that from 1948, when the Jewish nation was reestablished, to 1988, was one biblical generation; that in this biblical generation, we would see these things happen. As already said, that time has come and gone nearly twice over. Regardless of all these failures, there are still people who believe in dispensational teachings.

Our God said salvation comes by grace through faith, not of works, it's the same God who says, I am enough for you and for the entire world, and I offer salvation to you as a gift, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. Paul said there is still hope for Israel, if it is grafted back into the original olive tree of God's chosen people. Our job today is to announce that:

- **God's law still stands**
- **His coming won't be a secret**
- **all are invited**
- all of us have the responsibility of giving the invitation.

Yes, we are to lift high the message of righteousness by faith, salvation as a gift, and the returning of the One who will restore what we lost in the garden. God has made provision through the cross to save both Jew and Gentile, and there is no need for a seven-year period for the antichrist to accomplish what Christ has already done. May God bless us as we lift high the cross.



Excerpts from Pastor Ron Kelly's sermon: "Israel, Antichrist, and The Messiah," delivered on November 4, 2023, at the Village Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan.



Jerusalem, My Happy Home

Jerusalem, my happy home,
O how I long for thee!
When will my sorrows have an end,
Thy joys when shall I see?

Thy walls are all of precious stone,
Most glorious to behold;
Thy gates are richly set with pearl,
Thy streets are paved with gold.

Thy garden and thy pleasant walks
My study long have been;
Such dazzling views by human sight
Have never yet been seen.

Lord, help us by Thy mighty grace,
To keep in view the prize,
Till Thou dost come to take us home
To that blest Paradise.