

DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH WEEK – THE LAST SEVEN YEARS OF THIS AGE

In the Old Testament book of Daniel, the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and foretold a future period of time – Gabriel referred to it as “seventy weeks” – during which certain events would take place concerning Israel, Jerusalem and Messiah (CP Dan 9:21-27). Seventy weeks literally means seventy sevens of years. Week is from the Hebrew word *shbuah*, which means seven. It refers to years, not days, because Daniel’s prayer, to which Gabriel is responding here concerns years (CP Dan 9:2-3). Thus, in the context of Dan 9:21-27 seventy weeks means four hundred and ninety years, which are divided into three periods.

The first period of seven weeks or forty-nine years, in V26, was the time appointed for the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity of the Jews. The fulfillment of this is recorded in Ezra, chapters 3-7, and Nehemiah, chapters 2-6. The second period of sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, was the time appointed between the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and Messiah’s crucifixion ... *and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off* (CP Dan 9:25-26). From the commencement of the rebuilding of Jerusalem until Christ was crucified was four hundred and eighty-three years, or sixty-nine weeks, so there is still one week, or seven years – Daniel’s seventieth week – yet to be fulfilled. The time gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks is the church age which began on the day of Pentecost in Ac 2 and will culminate in the rapture of the church at the first resurrection, when Jesus comes again to take all the saints of God, both living and dead – Old Testament and New Testament alike – back to heaven with Him (CP Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Th 2:1-8; Rev 3:10). For a more detailed study on the rapture see this author’s comments on Lu 21:36, Jn 5:28-29, 14:1-3, 1Cor 15:51-58, Php 3:20-21, 1Th 4:13-18, 5:1-11, 2Th 1:1-3, 2:6-8, Rev 1:19, 3:7-13 in *A Question and Answer Study of the New Testament*. Also, refer his study – *The Rapture – Lesson 12, Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith*).

The seven year period of Daniel’s seventieth week has been decreed to be fulfilled in the last seven years of this age after the church has been raptured to heaven. This period will be the worst time of affliction and distress ever to occur in the history of the world. It centers on Antichrist and the tribulation, and ends at the second coming of Christ (CP Dan 9:26-27; 11:31; 12:1; Mt 24:15-31).

At His second coming Christ will fulfill the six things Gabriel foretold in Dan 9:24 (CP Dan 9:24). *To finish the transgression* means that at Christ’s second coming the transgression of unbelief, which resulted in the rejection of Christ by Israel, will cease. The whole nation will be converted to Christ in one day (CP Dan 9:11; with Isa 66:7-12; Eze 36:24-28; 37:21-28; Ro 11:25-32). *To make an end of sins* means that at His second coming Christ will pour out the spirit of grace upon Israel. All Israel will turn to Christ and He will forgive their sins (CP Eze 43:7-12; Zech 12:10 – 13:1; Ro 11:25-32). *To make reconciliation for iniquity* means that at Christ’s second coming

Israel will be fully reconciled to God (CP Psa 14:7; 94:14; Isa 10:20-23; 11:10-13; 27:12-13; 59:20-21; 66:8-13; Jer 23:3-6; 31:31-34; Eze 37:12-14; Joel 2:32; Mic 2:12-13; 4:6-8; 5:7-8; Zech 8:6-8; 12:8-13:1; Mt 24:30-31; Ro 9:27-29; 11:1-5, 23, 26-29).

Christ made atonement for the sins of the world on the cross (CP Mt 26:28; Jn 1:29 Ac 10:43; 2Cor 5:14; 1Ti 2:5-6; He 2:9, 17; 1Jn 2:2). But Israel as a nation has not yet partaken of the benefits of the cross because of her rejection of Christ. God cut Israel off from His blessing as a nation when she rejected Christ and crucified Him at the end of Daniel’s sixty-ninth week (CP Isa 65:1-2; Mt 21:43-44; 23:37-39; Lu 21:20-24; Ac 13:44-47; Ro 9:30-33; 10:1-4, 19-21; 11:7-10, 25).

To bring in everlasting righteousness means that at Christ’s second coming, Israel, having made an end of its transgression and sins and accepted Christ’s atoning death for its iniquity, will have everlasting righteousness (CP Isa 12:1-6; Eze 43:7; Ro 11:26-27). *To seal up the vision and the prophecy* means that at Christ’s second coming all prophecies concerning Israel and Jerusalem will be fulfilled. There will be no need for further prophetic rebuke of Israel, for God will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more (CP Isa 65:18-19; Jer 31:31-34; Ro 11:25-27). *To anoint the most holy* means that at Christ’s second coming, He will consecrate the most holy place in the temple, which is described in Ezekiel Ch 40 – 48 (CP Eze 40:5 – 48:35). This temple is still future but Christ Himself will build it (CP Zech 6:12-13; Rev 21:1-3). *The tabernacle of God that is with men* in Rev 21:3 is God’s temple in the New Jerusalem. That John said he saw no temple in V22 simply means that there is no temple or shrine as an object of worship in New Jerusalem. Both God and Jesus will be the object of worship (CP Rev 21:22). Scriptures clearly teach that God’s temple is in New Jerusalem; it is His throne forever (CP Isa 2:2-3; Eze 37:26-28; 43:1-7; Joel 3:17; Hag 2:6-9 with Rev 3:12; 11:19; 15:5-8; 16:1, 17). Some Christians believe that *to anoint the most holy* refers to the Jews anointing Christ at His second coming preparatory to His millennial – thousand years – reign on earth. But that is not correct, for no man can anoint Christ – only God can, and He has already done it (CP Dan 7:13-14; Lu 22:29; Ac 2:36; Php 2:9-11; He 1:1-3, 8-9; Rev 11:15; 19:11-16).

Many Christians believe that Daniel’s seventieth week has already been fulfilled. But that is not correct as scriptures clearly teach. *The prince who shall come* in Dan 9:26, and make and break his seven year peace treaty with Israel in 9:27 is Antichrist, and he has not yet been revealed (CP Dan 9:26-27). Antichrist cannot be revealed until the church age has been fulfilled and the church has been raptured, as we learned earlier on in Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28-29; 14:1-3; 1Cor 15:51-58; Php 3:20-21; 1Th 4:13-18; 2Th 2:1-8 and Rev 3:10. These scriptures all foretell events that define the end of the church age and depict the rapture of the church together with all the saints of God, both living and dead – Old Testament and New Testament alike – to heaven by

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Jesus (CP 2Th 2:6-7). It is the church Paul refers to here as the restrainer of lawlessness that must be taken out of the way before the revelation of Antichrist and the onset of the tribulation, which fulfills Daniel's seventieth week.

That the rapture of the church precedes Daniel's seventieth week, is also proved by the fact that the church is never again mentioned in scripture as being on earth after Rev 3:22. It is in heaven, represented by the twenty-four elders seated around God's throne (CP Rev 4:1-4, 9-11; 5:8-10; 19:1-4). The four and twenty elders identified themselves in Rev 5:9 as the church, redeemed to God from out of every tribe, language, people, and nation in the earth (CP Rev 5:9). *The things which must be hereafter* in Rev 4:1 refers to events that are predestined to take place after *the things which thou hast seen*, pertaining to the vision John had received of the glorified Christ in Ch 1 and *the things which are*, pertaining to the rapture of the church and the fulfilling of the church age, in Ch 2 – 3 (CP Rev 1:19). *The things which must be hereafter* are all described in Ch 6 – 19. They include the revelation of Antichrist and the tribulation, which, as stated earlier, will be the worst time of affliction and distress ever to occur in the history of the world. It will extend over the whole of the seven years of Daniel's seventieth week, culminating in Christ's second coming and the defeat of Antichrist and his confederation of nations at the battle of Armageddon (CP Zech 14:1-3; Rev 19:11-21). We will go into more detail regarding Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon later. All the events leading up to this in Daniel's seventieth week are recorded for us in Rev 6:1 – 19:21. Let us study these scriptures now and find out exactly what they teach (CP Rev 6:1-2).

Here we have the revelation of Antichrist. Many in the church think that the rider of the white horse is Jesus, but that is not correct because Jesus is opening the seals; He would not be the contents of the seals and open them as well. Furthermore, Jesus is symbolized by a lamb here, not a horseman (CP 5:1-10). The rider on the white horse in Rev 6:2 is Antichrist. The opening of the first seal and the revelation of Antichrist are synonymous with the first half of Daniel's seventieth week. Antichrist rises up at the start of this period and enters into a seven year peace treaty with Israel which he breaks after three and a half years, and then makes war himself on Israel (CP Dan 7:7-8, 20-21, 24-25; 8:8-13, 23-25; 11:36-45 with 9:24-27; Rev 12:13-17). These scriptures symbolize the emergence of Antichrist at the start of Daniel's seventieth week as the little horn among the other ten horns. He rises to power as the eleventh king among the other ten kings through the empowering of Satan (CP Dan 8:24 with 2Th 2:8-9; Rev 13:1-8).

The white horse of Rev 6:2 is not to be confused with the white horse of 19:11. The horse in 6:2 is only symbolic whereas the horse in 19:11 is literal. Christ is the rider of the white horse in 19:11, but until then He is symbolized by a lamb (CP Rev 19:11-13). There are no scriptures whatever to corroborate any teaching that Christ is the rider of the white horse in Rev 6:2 who went forth "*conquering, and to*

conquer". Antichrist was given a crown because he had brought peace and prosperity to the earth. He has a bow but no arrows, which depicts him as a benevolent dictator. We know he brought peace to the earth in V2 because in V4, after the opening of the second seal, he is given power to take it away (CP 6:3-4). As we saw previously, this power comes from Satan.

The opening of the second seal in Rev 6:3, and the revelation of the rider on the red horse and the events that followed in V4 signaled the onset of the great tribulation in the middle of Antichrist's reign. This is synonymous with the second half, or the last three and a half years, of Daniel's seventieth week (CP Dan 7:25; 9:27; 11:36-39; 12:1; Mt 24:6-7, 15-22). We learn from all this that the great tribulation will occupy the last three and a half years of Antichrist's seven year reign. In the first three and a half years the tribulation will be less severe for Antichrist is a benevolent dictator, not yet the enemy of God. He becomes God's enemy at the end of the first three and a half years when he breaks his peace treaty with Israel and sets up the "abomination of desolation" in the temple (CP Dan 9:27; 11:31, 36-37; 12:11; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14). *Abomination of desolation* means "abomination that desolates or appalls". Here it refers to the image Antichrist will set up of himself as God in the temple which people will be forced to worship or be killed (CP 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:1-6, 11-15).

The revelation of Antichrist is contained in the first two seals but there are still five seals yet to be opened (CP Rev 6:5-6). At the opening of the third seal here we see famine personified as the rider of the black horse. The exorbitant price of grain and the scales for weighing it symbolizes the scarcity of food and the economic hardship the world will suffer during Antichrist's reign (CP Eze 4:16-17; Mt 24:5-8). It is not clear what the command not to hurt the oil and the wine means. Knowing is not fundamental to salvation so it serves no purpose to speculate (CP Rev 6:7-8). Here we see death and hell personified as two horsemen. Together with the sword and famine, personified by the previous two horsemen – revealed after the opening of the second and third seals in V 3-6 – and the beasts of the earth, they will kill a quarter of the earth's population. There will be an intensification of war, famine, pestilence, evil beasts and death during the tribulation (CP Lev 26:22; Eze 5:16-17; 14:21; 33:27-29). The four horsemen involved in Rev 6:3-8 are known in Christendom as "the four horsemen of the apocalypse" (CP 6:9-11).

This signifies the multitude of saints who will be martyred during the tribulation (CP Mt 24:9; Rev 7:9-14; 17:6). They were beheaded for their witness to Christ (CP Rev 13:7-8, 15-17; 14:13; 15:2-4; 20:4). These are not the church saints as so many Christians believe. The church and the Old Testament saints were raptured to heaven, which God had predestined before these things – *the things which must be hereafter* – began in Rev 4 (CP 4:1). The tribulation saints cry for God to avenge their blood in Rev 6:10 is for the vindication of God's justice, not for personal vengeance. It is a prayer that the wicked who have

rejected God and killed His saints, will receive divine justice (CP Ro 12:19 with Rev 18:1-2, 5, 7, 15-16, 20; 19:2).

It should be noted here that the only ones who will be saved during the tribulation are those who have never had an adequate opportunity to receive the knowledge of the truth or to hear and understand the gospel while the church is on earth - before it is raptured to heaven (CP 2Th 2:7-12). This teaches us that salvation will no longer be available to those who have already heard the gospel and rejected it, once the church is taken out of the way. This includes members of our immediate family and other relatives and friends whom we dearly love, as well as professing Christians not truly committed to Christ, and others who are backslidden. Show them all this scripture and explain what it means, so that they may be won to Christ. There is no time to lose – the rapture could happen at any moment; there are no prophecies yet to be fulfilled for the rapture to happen (CP Php 3:20-21; Tit 2:13).

Now to the opening of the sixth seal (CP Rev 6:12-17). Here, for the first time since the seals were opened, we see God's judgement upon sinners. Prior to this, the sword, representing war, famine, death and hell were the natural consequences of Antichrist going forth "conquering and to conquer" (CP 6:1-9). Now, in V12, God unleashes His judgement upon the earth from which there will be no escape for those left on earth who have heard the gospel and rejected it, after the church is raptured to heaven (CP V15-17 with Lu 14:24 and Ro 1:32; 2Th 2:7-12). When God brings down his judgement upon the earth during the tribulation, sinners would rather be crushed to death by mountains and rocks than endure the judgement of God and the wrath of Jesus (CP Hos 10:8; Lu 23:27-30). This is the wrath from which Christ promises to save the church (CP Ro 5:8-9; Eph 5:1-6; 1Th 1:10; 5:2-11; 2Pe 2:9; Rev 3:10).

God's judgement on the earth in Rev 6:12-17 will be so cataclysmic it will cause the sky to recede as if it were a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island will be moved from its position (CP He 12:26-27).

Before moving on we should look at the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews in Chapter 7 who are given the seal of God. While they may not be integral to this study they are part of Daniel's seventieth week and integral to God's end-time purpose for national Israel. We need to know what that purpose is (CP Rev 7:1-8). These hundred and forty-four thousand Jews are not symbolic, as many believe. They do not represent the church or any professing Christian organization. They are true Jews - twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, named in V5-8 – who will be sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads to ensure their safety during the trumpet judgements of God on the earth during the first three and a half years of the tribulation (CP 8:1-2, 6 - 9:1, 13 with 9:4). The hundred and forty-four thousand are raptured to heaven between the seventh trumpet and the first vial, or plague judgements, are poured out upon the earth. This is in the middle of the tribulation (CP 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8). We know the

hundred and forty-four thousand are in heaven at this time, because Re 14:3-4 teaches that they were redeemed *from* the earth, and *from* among men. Mount Zion in Rev 14:1 is the heavenly Mt Zion (CP He 12:18-23).

Some in the church believe that the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews will be instrumental in the salvation of countless numbers of both Jews and Gentiles during the first three and a half years of the tribulation, and they use Rev 7:9-17 to support this teaching (CP 7:9-17). These saints were all saved out of the tribulation, but there is nothing in this passage of scripture to indicate that the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews were instrumental in their salvation. The significance of the hundred and forty-four thousand is that they will be the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new redeemed Israel as Rev 14:4 clearly teaches (CP Ro 9:27; 11:1-5). The statement in Rev 14:4 that "these are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins", can be taken literally to mean that they were celibate, which enabled them to care more for the things of God (CP 1Cor 7:32-33). Or, it can be taken figuratively to mean that they were spiritually pure, not having defiled themselves with the uncleanness and whoredom attendant on idolatry (CP 2Cor 11:2). Both interpretations can be applied to the hundred and forty-four thousand (CP Rev 8:1-6).

The opening of the seventh seal here reveals the seven trumpet judgements of God about to be unleashed upon the earth in response to the prayers of saints (CP V4 with 5:8; 6:9-11). When the seventh seal is opened there is silence in heaven for half an hour. Most bible commentators agree that this silence signifies the awe and anticipation in heaven at the grim reality of the seven trumpet judgements about to be unleashed on the earth. The trumpet judgements will not affect the church; it has already been raptured and is in heaven when the trumpets sound, as our previous studies on Rev 1:19 and 3:7-13 clearly prove. Many in the church believe the trumpet judgements are merely symbolic, not literal, but that is not correct. They are to be taken just as literally as the seven seals that precede them, and the seven vials, or bowl judgements which follow (CP Rev 8:7; 8:8-9; 8:10-11; 8:12; 9:1-12; 9:13-21; 10:7).

The trumpet judgements are also as literal as God's judgements which brought plagues upon Egypt in the Old Testament (CP Ex 7:19-21; 8:5-6, 16-17, 24; 9:5-6, 8-10, 22-26; 10:12-15, 21-23; 11:1, 4-7; 12:29-30). These were all literal judgements and so are all the judgements God will pour out upon the earth in the tribulation. They have been foretold throughout scripture (CP Mt 24:7-8, 21-22; Lu 21:22-26; Ro 2:5-9; 5:9; Eph 5:6; Col 3:5-6; 1Th 1:10; Rev 6:12-17; 16:1-12, 17-21). The first trumpet judgement in Rev 8:7 is similar to the seventh Egyptian plague in Ex 9:22-26, and will be just as literal (CP Rev 8:7 with Ex 9:22-23). The second trumpet judgement in Rev 8:8-9 undoubtedly refers to a huge meteorite cast into the sea. (Meteorites burn up when they enter earth's atmosphere). It contaminates a third of the sea, turning it into blood and killing a third of all the sea creatures. It also destroys a third of the ships. In the

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first plague in Egypt in Ex 7:19-21 every drop of water in the land turned to blood: streams, rivers, ponds, even pools of water (CP Rev 8:8-9 with Ex 7:19-21). The same thing will happen in the second and third vial judgements, after the trumpet judgements are complete (CP Rev 16:3-6).

This clearly refutes any suggestion that the seven trumpet judgements are not literal (CP Rev 8:13). Here an angel (KJV), flies in the midst of heaven warning the inhabitants of the earth of the terrible things they must still suffer when the three remaining trumpets are sounded. The first four trumpet judgements were bad enough, but they will be nowhere near as devastating as the next three (CP Rev 9:1-12; 13-21; 10:7 with 11:14-15 and 12:12). It should be noted here that Rev 8:13 is not teaching that angels have wings. Angels can fly without wings (CP Rev 14:6-20). Men in their imaginings have depicted angels with wings, but that is not taught anywhere in scripture. Most modern bible versions translate *angel* in 8:13 as "eagle" (CP Rev 9:1-2).

The fifth trumpet judgement and the first woe in Rev 8:13 are synonymous with each other. The fifth, sixth and seventh trumpet judgements will bring down unimaginable punishment on the inhabitants of earth. In the fifth trumpet judgement hordes of demon locusts are loosed upon the earth to torment the inhabitants for five months. They will inflict pain upon the people like scorpion bites. The pain will be so terrible that those who are stung will want to die, but cannot. The only humans the demon locusts cannot touch are the 144,000 Jews who will be raptured to heaven between the seventh trumpet judgement and the first vial, or plague judgement (CP Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8).

The star that fell from heaven in Rev 9:1, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit, was an angel of God - not a fallen angel, or Satan, as so many in the church believe. God would not entrust the key of the bottomless pit, which is a prison for fallen angels/demon spirits, to another fallen angel, or Satan. Furthermore, Satan is in heaven at this time - he is not cast out into the earth until Rev 12 (CP 12:7-13). Also, a fallen angel would hardly cast his own master - Satan - in chains into the bottomless pit, as the angel with the key of the bottomless pit does (CP Rev 20:1-3). This is undoubtedly the same angel of God who was given the key of the bottomless pit in Rev 9:1. This angel is not to be confused with the angel of the bottomless pit in 9:11, who is a fallen angel (CP 9:11). This also is not Satan. This angel will be loosed together with the demon locusts when the angel of God opens the pit. He will direct the demon locusts. This completes the first of the three woes, but the worst is yet to come (CP Rev 9:13-21).

The sixth trumpet judgement is synonymous with the second woe in Rev 8:13. The four angels that are bound here are fallen angels. God has ordained their release to occur at a fixed moment in time, to kill a third of all who are left on the earth "... and the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (CP V15). The four angels

will lead the 200,000,000 demon horsemen, who are loosed from the bottomless pit, in executing this judgement on a third of the world's inhabitants. These will be wounded by the horses' tails, and killed by the fire and smoke and brimstone which issues from their mouths (CP V16-19). Those who are left on the earth still will not repent though, or give up their idol worship (CP V20-21). They would rather suffer and blaspheme God than let Him be glorified in their salvation (CP Rev 16:8-11, 21). This demonstrates the depths of man's depravity and underlines the reason why God will pour out His judgement upon the earth in the first place (CP Ecc 9:3; Jer 17:9-10 with Psa 62:11-12; Jer 32:19; Ro 2:5-6; Jas 5:1-8; Rev 11:3, 6). The next event in the chronology of Daniel's seventieth week – the seventh trumpet judgement – foreshadows the close of the first half of the week – the first three and a half years of the tribulation (CP Rev 10:1-7). The mighty angel here is Jesus. Only Jesus could refer, as this angel does, to the two witnesses in chapter 11, as *my two witnesses* (CP Rev 11:1-3). Also, the mighty angel is carrying the book Jesus received from God in Rev 5. Only Jesus could open this book and loose its seven seals (CP Rev 5:1-2, 5, 7-9). Rev 10:1-11 is a parenthetical passage. This means that it has been inserted here between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgements, to explain things that are not part of the trumpet judgements, but occur at the same time.

The mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets, that will be fulfilled during the seventh trumpet judgement, is revealed in Rev 12. The seventh trumpet judgement is synonymous with the third woe pronounced by the angel flying in the midst of heaven after the fourth trumpet judgement (CP Rev 8:12-13 with 11:14-15 and 12:7-12). The third woe synonymous with the seventh trumpet judgement is the casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth in Rev 12:7-12, "... *woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time*". This is the mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets that will be delayed no longer. It will be fulfilled during the seventh trumpet judgement. The casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth has been prophesied since the world began (CP Gen 3:15; Psa 91:13; Isa 14:12-15; 24:21; 25:7; 27:1; Eze 28:11-19; Lu 10:17-19; Ro 16:20).

The casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth precipitates the great tribulation – the last three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week – when Antichrist sets up the abomination of desolation – the image of himself as God – in the temple (CP Rev 11:1-2). The temple of God here does not exist yet. It will be rebuilt by the Jews before the commencement of the seven years reign of Antichrist, who desecrates it in the middle of his reign by placing the image of himself as God, in it, and forcing people to worship the image or be killed. It will be made desolate for the last three and a half years of the tribulation after Antichrist breaks his peace treaty with Israel (CP Dan 7:25; 8:9-14; 9:27; 12:7-12; Mt 24:15-21; 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:11-15). The phrase *a time, times, and half a time, or the dividing of time* in scripture refers to the last three

and a half years - or forty-two months, as in Rev 11:2 - of the tribulation (CP Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14). Rev 11:3 and 12:6 refers to this period as *a thousand two hundred and three score days* (CP Rev 11:3; 12:6). During this time Antichrist makes war on Israel until God purges Israel of every rebel (CP Eze 20:33-38; Zech 13:8-9; Mal 3:1-6). We learn in Zech 13:8-9 here that altogether two thirds of the nation of Israel will perish in the tribulation. Measuring the Jewish part of the temple - the altar and those who worship there - and not the court of the Gentiles, symbolizes measuring the spiritual condition of the Jews preparatory to their being trodden underfoot by the gentiles, under Antichrist. They will trample down both the temple, and Jerusalem (CP Lu 21:22-28; Ro 11:25). We also learn from these scriptures that the times of the Gentiles will not end until the second three and a half years of the tribulation are finished, and Christ comes back to earth. He will deliver the Jews from the Gentiles under Antichrist, and set up an earthly kingdom over them forever (CP Dan 2:44; 7:13-14, 18, 27; Lu 1:32-33; Rev 11:15; 19:11-21).

Notwithstanding the severity of the great tribulation, there will be multitudes saved due to the testimony of Christ's two witnesses (CP Rev 11:3-6). The general consensus among bible commentators is that the two witnesses here are Moses and Elijah. But we can only be certain from scripture of Elijah (CP Mal 4:5-6). "Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" refers to the latter half of the tribulation leading up to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon. *A thousand two hundred and three score days* is three and a half years. The two witnesses' testimony during these last three and a half years will turn multitudes of people back to God. While scriptures do not directly teach who the other witness is, they point to Enoch. Of all the Old Testament saints, only he and Elijah are yet to die. Scriptures teach that everyone under the curse - except the saints still living at the rapture - has to die once (CP He 9:27). Enoch and Elijah are still living; they were translated alive to heaven (CP Gen 5:21-24; 2Ki 2:1, 9-12). In light of He 9:27 Moses could not be the other witness, because he has already died once (CP De 34:5-8). Enoch and Elijah are the only Old Testament saints who are yet to die. They will die as God's two witnesses when they finish their testimony at the end of the three and a half years. Thus scripture will be fulfilled (CP Rev 11:7-12).

The seventh trumpet judgement continues throughout the last three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week and includes the seven vials judgement and the seven last plagues. God's wrath is poured out upon sinners, but He still has a redeeming purpose in the midst of judgement (CP Rev 11:14-19). The temple of God being opened to reveal the Ark of the Covenant in Rev 11:19 signifies God's redeeming purpose in the midst of judgement. The third woe in V14 is the last of the three woes pronounced by the angel flying in the midst of heaven in Rev 8:13. These three woes are synonymous with the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpet judgements. As we learned in our study on Rev 10:1-7, the third woe synonymous with the seventh trumpet judgement is the casting down of Satan out of heaven to the earth.

This is the mystery of God which He has declared to the prophets that will be delayed no longer. It will be fulfilled at this time (CP Rev 10:1-7; 12:7-12). The seventh trumpet judgement involves the events of the last three and a half years of the tribulation leading up to Christ's second coming. It includes the seven vial or bowl judgements beginning in Rev 16:1 (CP 16:1-4, 8, 10, 12, 17). In Rev 11:16 the church, represented by the twenty-four elders, prophesy what will happen at Christ's second coming: hostile nations will be overcome by God's wrath (CP Psa 21:9; Isa 26:20-21; 30:27-28; 2Th 1:7-10); the wicked dead will be judged at the great white throne judgement at the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth (CP Rev 20:11-15). Satan though will be judged both before and after Christ's millennial reign (CP Rev 20:1-10). The saints will be judged at the judgement seat of Christ in heaven. Scriptures do not say when, so it is no use speculating (CP Ro 14:10-12; 1Cor 3:11-15; 2Cor 5:10).

By His defeat of Satan, God becomes sovereign over the kingdom of this world. Until then Satan is its prince, or god (CP Jn 12:31; 14:30; 2Cor 4:3-4; Eph 2:1-2). Although God is sovereign over the kingdom of this world after He casts out Satan, it will still be three and a half years before He actually takes possession of the earth because the tribulation has to run its course first.

After Satan is cast down from heaven to the earth he makes war with Israel through Antichrist. Israel is depicted as a woman giving birth to a "manchild". We need to know who that manchild is for a better understanding of God's purposes for national Israel (CP Rev 12:1-5). The woman here symbolizes the nation of Israel. Israel is depicted many times in scripture as a woman in travail giving birth (CP Isa 26:16-18; 54:1-6; 66:7-12; Hos 1:2-11; Mic 4:10; 5:2-3). The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel. *The great red dragon* is Satan (CP Job 41; Psa 74:14; 91:13; Isa 27:1; Rev 13:2-4; 16:13; 20:2). Satan, together with Antichrist, makes war on Israel during the second three and a half years of the tribulation, after he is cast out of heaven down to the earth (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:24-25; 2Th 2:8-9; Rev 6:4; 12:4, 7-17; 13:1-8). Having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads, symbolizes Satan's domination of seven past world kingdoms and ten future world kingdoms which he will dominate through his empowering of Antichrist (CP Dan 7:7-8, 24-25; 2Th 2:7-9; Rev 13:1-8). *A third of the stars of heaven* symbolize the number of angels cast out of heaven down to earth with Satan (CP Isa 14:12-15; Eze 28:11-19; Rev 12:7-9).

The general consensus among bible commentators is that the manchild the woman brought forth in Rev 12:5, who will rule all nations with a "rod of iron", and who was caught up to God and His throne is Jesus (CP 12:5). The difficulty with the view that this is Jesus however is that it looks back on the past, whereas everything that is revealed to John from Rev 4:1 onward pertains to the future (CP Rev 1:19; 4:1). *Things which must be hereafter* clearly refer to future, not past things, and on that basis the manchild in Rev 12:5 cannot represent Jesus in the past, but something that will be fulfilled in the future - in the

tribulation, because the woman gives birth during the tribulation. The only thing caught up to God – raptured to heaven – during the tribulation, which the manchild could possibly represent, are the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews – the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new redeemed Israel (CP Isa 66:7-8; Jer 30:6-9; Dan 12:1; Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5 with Ro 9:27; 11:1-5).

These scriptures all point to the manchild as representing the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews. They are before the throne of God in Rev 14:3 just as the manchild was "caught up unto God and His throne" in Rev 12:5. *Manchild* in Isa 66:7 is referred to as *her children* in 66:8. In Jer 30 the manchild - *he* - in V7, is called *they* in V9. Daniel prophesied in Dan 12:1 that every Jew whose name is written in the book of life will be delivered - raptured to heaven - in the middle of the tribulation after Satan is cast out of heaven down to the earth. This is what happened to the manchild in Rev 12:5 (CP 12:5). We know that the names of the hundred and forty-four thousand are written in the book of life because they are sealed with the seal of God. They are the only ones living on earth who will not be affected by the trumpet judgements during the first three and a half years of the tribulation, before they are raptured to heaven (CP Rev 7:1-4; 8:1-2, 6; 9:1-4). Finally, Rev 14:3-4 teaches that the hundred and forty-four thousand were redeemed by Jesus **from** (out of) the earth, and **from** (out of), among men, to heaven. Mount Zion, on which they stand with Jesus in 14:1 is the heavenly, not the earthly Mount Zion (CP He 12:18-23). As was the manchild, so too the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews are raptured in the middle of the tribulation, between the seventh trumpet and the first plague judgement (CP Rev 14:1-5 with 15:1, 6-8).

The rod of iron with which the manchild is to rule all nations in Rev 12:5, simply means to rule with authority. All the redeemed of God will rule with authority like Jesus (CP Psa 2:7-9; Psa 149:5-9; Dan 7:18, 27; Mt 19:28; 1Cor 6:2-3; Rev 1:4-6; 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:4-5). These scriptures all prove that it is not only Jesus who is ordained to rule with a "rod of iron".

Some in the church believe that the sun with which the woman is clothed in Rev 12:1 symbolizes the righteousness of Christ; the moon under her feet represents Jewish ordinances superseded by the teachings of Christ, and the twelve stars on her head symbolize the twelve apostles. None of this of course has any biblical basis whatever and it must be rejected. Another view is that the sun, moon and stars depict the glory and dominion which Israel has been promised in the coming kingdom, but again there is no biblical basis for this view. It is futile to speculate what the sun and moon mean without any clear scriptural guidelines.

Another view of the manchild is that it represents the church. This originates in the belief that the seventh trumpet in Rev 11:5 is the same as the "last trump" which precedes the rapture of the church in both 1Cor 15:52 and 1Th 4:16 (CP Rev 11:15 with 1Cor 15:51-58 and 1Th 4:13-18). Rev 11:14-19 clearly refutes this teaching – the seventh trumpet sounds midway

through the tribulation. Also the church has been raptured by Rev 4:1 which sees the emergence of Antichrist and the onset of the tribulation. Still another view is that the manchild is the "bride part" of the church. This teaching claims that the bride of Christ is not the whole church but a select company of believers – the manchild – out of the church. The theory is that the manchild represents only those believers who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and that all other believers compose the woman and the remnant who are left behind on earth after the rapture to go through the tribulation. Those who espouse this view use the parable of the ten virgins to support it. In affect they are teaching that the church consists of two classes of believers, which is totally unscriptural. The church consists of only one class of believer (CP 1Cor 12:12-28; Eph 2:13-22; 4:1-6, etc). Scriptures must be the final arbiter on all matters of doctrine. The only view on doctrine to which we can hold, is that which can be proved by scripture. All other views must be rejected (CP Ac 17:10-11; 1Th 5:21; 1 Jn 4:1).

When Satan cannot destroy the hundred and forty-four thousand Jews – the firstfruits out of the tribulation of a new redeemed Israel – because they are raptured to heaven – *caught up to the throne of God*, he persecutes Israel through Antichrist (CP Rev 12:6). Satan causes Antichrist to break his seven-year peace treaty with Israel in the middle of the treaty, and empowers him to make war with Israel during the last three and a half years of the tribulation "... a thousand two hundred and three score days" (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:8-10, 23-25; 9:27; 2Th 2:7-9; Rev 13:1-2, 4-7). *A time and times and the dividing of times* in Dan 7:25 also refers to the last three and a half years of the tribulation. *The two wings of a great eagle* in Rev 12:14, symbolizes how God sustains Israel during her flight from the forces of Antichrist and for the three and a half years she is in the wilderness. This symbolism has its origin in the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt (CP Ex 19:4; De 32:11-12; Isa 63:9). The "water as a flood" which the dragon casts out of his mouth after the woman in Rev 12:15, refers to the armies of Antichrist. Armies are often symbolized by floods in the Old Testament (CP Jer 46:7-8; 47:1-4; Dan 9:26-27; 11:21-26, 40). The earth will open up and swallow the armies of Antichrist as it swallowed up those who rebelled against Moses in the Old Testament (CP Nu 16:28-34). The remnant of the woman's seed in Rev 12:17 which the dragon went to make war with after the woman escaped from the armies of Antichrist are Jews who did not flee with the woman into the wilderness. They obviously get saved after the hundred and forty-four thousand are raptured. The name of the place in the wilderness to which the woman will flee is Petra, or Sela, as it is also called, which is located in Moab (CP Isa 16:1-5; 26:20).

Antichrist is also symbolized in the revelation of the great tribulation as the beast rising up out of the sea (CP Rev 13:1-7). The beast out of the sea here is Antichrist. This is the same beast that carries the great whore in Rev 17:3. They both have seven heads and ten horns. Satan is also depicted like this (CP Rev 12:1-5; 17:1-7). It is generally agreed

among bible commentators that the symbolism of the leopard in Rev 13:2 typifies Greece; the bear, Medo-Persia; and the lion, Babylon. They were all violent and cruel oppressors of Israel during the Old Testament period before the Romans conquered Israel, and the fact that John saw them depicted in the beast means that Antichrist will combine all their evil features (CP V2). The sea out of which Antichrist rises up symbolizes peoples, nations, multitudes and tongues; inhabitants of the earth (CP Dan 7:2-3; Rev 17:1, 15). Antichrist is a human being who rises up to power from the sea of humanity. He is not a supernatural being as so many Christians believe, but is empowered to do signs and wonders and work miracles, by both Satan and the beast out of the earth, which God permits. Many inhabitants of the earth at that time will think that Antichrist died of his head wound in Rev 13:3 and that God brought him back to life, thus duplicating Christ's death and resurrection, and attesting to Antichrist's deity. But the healing will be effected by Satan and the false prophet to deceive the people into worshipping Antichrist's image, believing him to be God. (CP Dan 8:23-24; 2Th 2:7-10; Rev 13:1-8; 13:11-15; 16:13-14; 19:20). It is pointless speculating who Antichrist is - scriptures are silent in this regard. However, they do tell us where he comes from (CP Isa 10:20-27; 14:24-27; 30:27-31; 31:4-9; Dan 11:36 - 12:13; Mic 5:3-15). Antichrist is an Assyrian - he comes from Syria. These scriptures all refer to Antichrist, including Dan 11:36 - 12:13. *The north* in Dan 11:36-45 refers to Syria (CP Rev 13:11-18).

Another beast here signifies another man in addition to the man - Antichrist - symbolized by the first beast in V1 (CP V1). *Earth* in V11, like *sea* in V1, is used symbolically of peoples. It is also the same Greek word as *world* in V3, which symbolizes the inhabitants of the earth (CP V3 with Gen 9:19; 11:1; 19:31; Rev 6:8; 11:6; 19:2). Thus we see that the man which the beast symbolizes in Rev 13:11 is also a human being like Antichrist. He too is not a supernatural being, as so many suppose. Some believe that he is Judas reincarnated, brought up from the underworld. If that was correct it means that Judas would then die twice, not once, yet scripture clearly teaches that everyone under the curse – except the saints still living at the time of the rapture – only has to die once (CP He 9:27 with 1Th 4:16-18). *Two horns like a lamb* symbolize the man as gentle natured, but in reality ... *and he spake like a dragon* depicts his real nature. He is an evil monster (CP Rev 13:11).

John refers to him as "the false prophet". He is empowered to work miracles and deceive people into believing that Antichrist is God. He will enable the image of Antichrist, which will be set up in the temple, to talk as God. He will cause people to worship the image and will behead those who refuse (CP Rev 13:12-15 with Mt 24:15; 2Th 2:3-4 and Rev 20:4). He will also cause people to receive the mark, or the name, or the number, of Antichrist in their right hand or in their foreheads, in order to buy and sell. It is better to die though than to receive any of these marks, or worship the beast, for all who do so will be destroyed by God (CP Rev 13:16-17 with 14:9-11). After their defeat by Jesus at Armageddon,

the false prophet and Antichrist will both be cast alive into the lake of fire (CP Rev 19:19-20). Satan will be bound in chains and cast into the bottomless pit during Christ's thousand years reign on earth, but he will be let loose at the end of the thousand years for a short time, and will try to start another rebellion against God. He will fail again and will then be cast into the lake of fire with Antichrist and the false prophet, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (CP Rev 20:1-3, 7-10).

It is pointless speculating what the mark of the beast / Antichrist will be. It is not his name or the number of his name, 666, for the mark, his name and the number of his name are all different. Scriptures clearly distinguish between them (CP Rev 13:16-18; 14:9; 15:2-4; 20:4). All we know is that it will be a literal mark (CP 13:16; 14:9).

Opinions vary among Christians as to which of the beasts in Rev 13 is Antichrist. Some hold to the first, others to the second. This study clearly proves the first is Antichrist. Being correct though is not fundamental to salvation, so when opinions differ let us agree to disagree in love.

To counteract the deceptions by Antichrist and the false prophet during the great tribulation the everlasting gospel will be preached throughout the earth (CP Rev 14:6-7). This is the same gospel message that has been proclaimed from the beginning. It will continue throughout the remaining three and a half years of the tribulation (CP Mt 24:14). The significance of the gospel at this time is that it is proclaimed to counteract the deceptions by Antichrist and the false prophet. They will deceive people by the signs and wonders and miracles they perform into believing that Antichrist is God (CP Dan 11:36-39; 2Th 2:3-4, 7-9; Rev 13:1-5, 11-18). The emphasis on the angel's gospel message is to fear God rather than Antichrist; to give glory to God rather than to man; and to worship God, not the image (CP Rev 14:9-11).

What the angel pronounces here emphasizes the absolute reality of hell, which sadly, many professing Christians believe is merely symbolic, not literal. Yet throughout scripture hell is depicted as a literal place of eternal punishment for the ungodly; a place of unquenchable fire, which expresses divine judgement (CP De 32:22; Psa 9:17; 55:15; Pr 15:11, 24; 23:13-14; Isa 5:14; 14:12-15; 66:24; Dan 7:9-11). Jesus Himself teaches that hell is a literal place of eternal punishment; a place of unquenchable fire where the ungodly are tormented day and night for ever (CP Mt 5:22, 29-30; 7:19; 13:36-42, 47-50; 25:31-46; Mk 9:43-48; Lu 12:4-5; 16:19-31; Jn 15:5-6). We see in all these scriptures that hell is both a judgement of punishment upon sinners, and a place in which the punishment occurs (CP Mt 8:12; 10:28; 11:23-24 (Lu 10:15); 18:8-9; 23:33; 25:24-30; Mk 3:29; Lu 12:5; Ro 2:4-5; Php 3:18-19; 2Th 1:8-9; He 10:39; Jas 3:6; 2Pe 2:17; Jude 7-13, 21-23; Rev 2:11).

In the Old Testament hell is **Sheol**, which means the world of the dead; the unseen world of departed spirits. Its corresponding word in the New Testament

is **Hades**, which means the region of the departed spirits of the lost. In the New Testament hell is also derived from the Greek word **geenna** - transliterated in English as **gehenna** - which means a place or state of the lost and condemned; the final destiny of the wicked. Clearly these all define hell as a literal place; a place of eternal punishment and torments; a place of unquenchable fire, expressing divine judgement. And the fact that the fire is unquenchable teaches that the punishment is unending, eternal. This clearly refutes the doctrine of complete annihilation of the unbelievers; that they do not undergo a permanent and changed state of being involving punishment and pain, as some teach. The state of human beings after death in Sheol / Hades, or hell is irreversible, although none of these places constitute the eternal state of sinners. Hades and hell are cast into the lake of fire at the great white throne judgement. The lake of fire is the final place of torment into which Satan and all the fallen angels, Antichrist and the false prophet, and everyone who ever lived whose names are not found written in the book of life, will be cast. This is called the second death (CP Rev 19:20; 20:4-6, 10-15; 21:7-8 with Isa 66:24). The first death is physical death at the end of one's earthly life.

Scriptures also refute the teaching that hell and the grave are one, as some believe. They are two distinct places as proved by scripture. The grave only holds the body, whereas hell holds both the soul and the spirit (CP Eze 31:14-17; 32:22-32). Here we see that hell and graves are clearly distinguishable (CP Rev 14:13).

Everyone who dies from this time onward in the great tribulation will be blessed because they will be martyred for their witness to Christ and their refusal to worship Antichrist and his image, or take his mark. The dead referred to here are those killed during the last three and a half years of the tribulation. They will be released from persecution, torture and suffering and taken to be with Jesus (CP Rev 7:9-14; 15:2; 20:4). *Works* in Rev 14:13 (KJV), refers to the results of their labours in the Lord. None of what they have done is wasted. God blesses them for it in the end (CP 1Cor 15:58).

There will be a harvest reaped in the earth at this time, but it will be a harvest of judgement (CP Rev 14:14-16). The harvest of the earth being reaped here is a harvest of judgement. It is not the harvest of the tribulation martyrs as many suppose (CP V 17-20; Joel 3:9-16 with Jer 25:30-33; 46:9-10; Hos 6:11; Zeph 3:8; Zech 14:1-7). These scriptures all point to the battle of Armageddon and Christ's final dealing with all who inhabit the earth. Armageddon is the "great winepress of the wrath of God" in Rev 14:19 (CP Rev 19:11-21 (also 2Th 1:7-10; 2:7-9); Isa 34:1-8; 63:1-6; Jude 14-15).

The wrath of God is nearly now complete. Daniel's seventieth week is nearing its fulfillment. The seven last plagues are about to be poured out upon the earth (CP Rev 15:1, 5-7). The seven last plagues are contained in the seven vials, or bowls judgement (CP Rev 16:1). The vials contain the seven last plagues - the final outpouring of God's wrath upon sinners -

which will bring finality to the tribulation (CP Rev 15:1). These are the last plagues emanating from the seventh trumpet judgement which will complete the seventh seal (CP Rev 8:1-2 with 11:15, 18). The first plague is directed to fall specifically upon all who take the mark of the beast and worship his image (CP 16:2). "Noisome and grievous sores" are ulcers, or boils. The second plague affects the sea. It will turn to blood and every living thing in it will die (CP 16:3). This is the same plague that falls during the second trumpet judgement in Rev 8:8-9, but then only one third of the sea will turn to blood. Here, all the sea turns to blood (CP Rev 8:8-9). The third plague will fall upon the rivers and fresh-water streams and springs. They will also turn to blood and there will be no fresh drinking-water (CP 16:4-6). The angel in V6 declares God's judgement of this plague to be fair and proper because its recipients are only getting back their due recompense for the blood of the martyred saints and the prophets which they shed (CP Rev 6:9-11; 17:1-6; 19:1-2 with 11:3, 7).

The fourth plague is scorching heat from the sun (CP Rev 16:8-9). However, regardless of the intense sunburn they suffer, men still will not repent, even though they know who causes the suffering, and why. They will still blaspheme God for sending the plagues (CP 9:20-21). The fifth plague is darkness – impenetrable blackness (CP 16:10-11). This is a repeat of the ninth plague on Egypt in Moses' day, but it will be even worse here (CP Ex 10:21-23). The fifth plague in Rev 16, like the first, is directed to fall only on Antichrist's kingdom. His followers will be the only ones affected. Their sores and pains from the previous plagues will not be healed yet and being enveloped in impenetrable blackness will cause them to bite their tongues. But they still will not repent. The sixth plague causes the River Euphrates to dry up (CP Rev 16:12). God has predestined this to enable the armies of the kings of the eastern kingdoms under the control of Antichrist to come to Armageddon where Christ will execute God's vengeance upon them (CP 16:13-16).

These three demon spirits go throughout all the other kingdoms of the world working miracles to induce their kings, who are not under the control of Antichrist, to cooperate with him at Armageddon with their armies, to fight Christ (CP Psa 2:1-3; Joel 3:1-4; Zech 12:2-9; 14:1-3; Rev 19:11-21). In V15 of Rev 16 there is a blessing pronounced upon all those living at that time who remain faithful to Christ, watching for His return and taking heed to how they walk in the presence of the ungodly (CP 16:15). The seventh and last plague in the tribulation is a great earthquake followed by hail. The earthquake will be the most powerful and devastating earthquake in the history of the world. It will split Jerusalem into three parts, destroy Babylon, the capital of Antichrist's kingdom, and radically alter the earth's topography. Every mountain and island will be moved from their position. This will be followed by an equally devastating hailstorm, with hailstones, each weighing about forty kilograms, bombarding the earth and killing all on whom they fall. Men will blaspheme God because the hailstorm is so devastating (CP 16:17-21). The assertion "... it is done" in V17, means that the outpouring of God's wrath upon the

earth is now complete. All told, two thirds of the nation of Israel will die in the tribulation (CP Zech 13:8-9). The tribulation will shortly end with Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 16:16).

The significance of Armageddon is that it will be the scene of the final battle between good and evil. It is here that the armies of Antichrist, which will be mobilized by the demon spirits in Rev 16:13-14 to fight Christ, will nearly all be killed (CP 16:13-14 with 19:11-21). Only one sixth of Antichrist's forces will be spared (CP Eze 39:1-7 (KJV)). The battle of Armageddon will last only one day (CP Isa 30:26; Zech 14:6-7). Yet the blood that is shed in that day will flow for two hundred miles - approximately 320 kilometres - at a depth of 1.2 metres, "... up to the horses bridles" (CP Rev 14:19-20). *Without the city* in V20 (KJV), means outside the city. Armageddon which means mountain of Megiddo, is approximately sixty miles north of Jerusalem. It will take seven years to burn the weapons of war from Armageddon, as firewood (CP Eze 39:8-10), and it will take the whole of Israel seven months to bury those killed in the battle, notwithstanding that the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field will also eat the dead bodies (CP Rev 19:17-18 with Eze 39:11-20).

Let us now look at the vast apostate religious system in league with Antichrist for the first three and a half years of the tribulation, which will be guilty of shedding the blood of countless numbers of believers. It is symbolized by a woman called Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth, sitting on a scarlet beast full of names of blasphemy and having seven heads and ten horns (CP Rev 17:1-6).

The beast upon which the woman sits symbolizes Antichrist (CP 13:1-7). The name of blasphemy the beast is full of refers to Antichrist's self-deification (CP Dan 7:25; 11:36-37; 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:5-6). The woman in Rev 17:1-6 is called Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. This Babylon is symbolic, and not to be confused with Great Babylon in Rev 16:19, which is a literal city that will be destroyed in the great earthquake during the seventh vial judgement of God upon the earth at the end of the tribulation (CP Rev 16:17-19 with Isa 13:19-22; Jer 51:5-8, 25-26; Rev 14:8; 18:1-3, 5, 8, 20-21). We see in all those scriptures that God destroys Babylon, the literal city, whereas Antichrist and the ten kings of the ten future world kingdoms, destroy Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth (CP Rev 17:12-17). This clearly proves that they are two distinct entities. Rev 17 is another parenthetical passage. It has been inserted here to show the contrast between symbolic Babylon, and Babylon the literal city. Babylon the literal city however, will be the seat of the apostate religious system (CP 17:18).

Fornication in Rev 17:1-6 is spiritual, it refers to idolatrous religious practices (CP Isa 23:17; 31:3-7; Jer 3:6-9; Eze 16:15-26, 30-32; 20:30-32; 23:13-17; Hos 4:12-19; 9:1; Nah 3:4; Jas 4:4; Rev 2:20-22). *Abominations* are Rev 17:1-6 covers everything that is detestable to God - especially idolatry and

licentiousness. Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth symbolizes a vast apostate religious system which has its origins in the religious rites and mysteries of ancient Babylon. It is immensely wealthy, and will have dominion over kings and kingdoms, political leaders and nations, and people throughout the earth. These are "the many waters" upon which "the great whore sits" in Rev 17:1-2 (CP Rev 17:7, 12:15). This apostate religious system, in league with Antichrist, will be responsible for shedding the blood of countless Christians for their witness to Christ during the first half of the tribulation (CP Rev 16:4-6 with 6:9-11; 17:6; 19:1-2). Antichrist will turn on the apostate religious system midway through the tribulation in order to set up his own image - the abomination of desolation - in the temple, to be worshipped as God, and the ten kings will destroy the apostate religious system (CP Dan 7:7-8, 21, 24-25; 8:8-12, 23-25; 9:27; 11:31, 36-39 with Mt 24:15; Rev 13:1-8; 17:16-17; 19:1-2).

The beast upon which the woman sits, which also rose up from the sea in Rev 1, does not symbolize Antichrist alone (CP Rev 13:1-7 with 17:7-17). We learn in 17:7-17 here that the beast also symbolizes a supernatural being presently confined to the bottomless pit or abyss, who will ascend out of the pit and kill God's two witnesses - Enoch and Elijah - at the end of the tribulation (CP Rev 17:8 with 11:3-7). To *go into perdition* means to be destroyed. The beast out of the bottomless pit, together with Antichrist and the false prophet will be destroyed by Christ at the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 19:19-20). It is pointless speculating exactly who the beast out of the bottomless pit is. Suffice to say it is not Antichrist, as so many Christians believe, because the bottomless pit or abyss, is a prison for demon spirits, not humans. Satan will be imprisoned there during the millennial reign of Christ (CP Lu 8:31; Rev 9:1-11; 20:1-3). The beast also symbolizes a kingdom controlled by Antichrist - the eighth, and last world kingdom before Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon "... and the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (CP Rev 17:9-11). *And is of the seven* means that the beast was also one of the seven kingdoms referred to in V10. He cannot be the sixth kingdom because that is the Roman empire which ruled over Israel in John's day - *and one is*. Neither can he be the seventh kingdom for that will be ruled by Antichrist - it is *not yet come*. The beast can only be one of the five kingdoms that are *fallen* - which have dominated Israel from when it was first made a captive nation by the Egyptians until it was conquered by the Romans. They are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece.

The sum of the beast is , it represents four things - three future and one past: Antichrist (Rev 13:1-7; 17:1-6, 12-13, 16-17); the supernatural being out of the bottomless pit (Rev 11:3-7; 17:8); one of the five kingdoms that ruled Israel before Rome (Rev 17:11); and the eighth and last world kingdom controlled by Antichrist that will war with Israel before Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (Rev 17:11). The ten horns on the beast symbolize ten kings and ten future kingdoms that will

Daniel's seventieth week – the last seven years of this age

arise from within the old Roman Empire (CP Dan 7:7-8, 19-21, 23-25). The fourth beast here symbolizes the Roman Empire - the sixth head on the beast of Rev 17, ... *the beast that is* (CP Rev 17:9-10). The little horn in Dan 7:8, 20, 24, is Antichrist (CP Dan 8:8-13, 23-25; 9:27; 11:36-45; Rev 13:1-7; 17:4). The ten kings will give their kingdoms to Antichrist and destroy the apostate religious system symbolized by the woman on the beast. This has all been foreordained by God in order that His purposes be fulfilled (CP Rev 17:12-17). This will occur in the middle of the tribulation so that Antichrist can set up the image of himself in the temple to be worshipped and proclaim himself to be God (CP Dan 11:31, 36-37; 12:11; Mt 24:15 (also Mk 13:14); 2Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:1-6, 11-15).

As noted earlier the events of Rev 17 occur at the end of the first three and a half years of Antichrist's reign. They are revealed out of chronological sequence in Daniel's seventieth week here simply to show the contrast between Babylon, the apostate religious system, and Babylon, the literal city (CP Rev 17:18 – 18:3).

The great city referred to here is the literal city of Babylon - seat of the apostate religious system which the woman, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth symbolizes. The woman and Babylon are two facets of the same city and power: They will both make nations drunk with the wine of their fornications, and be responsible for the death of great multitudes of believers during the tribulation (CP Rev 6:9-11; 7:9-14; 17:1-6 with 18:2-3, 7, 9, and 24).

However, they are two distinct entities, as scriptures clearly teach (CP Isa 13:1-6, 11-13, 19-22; 47:1-5; Jer 51:5-9 with Rev 14:8; 16:17-21; 18:8-10, 17-19). These scriptures all refer to Babylon as a literal city. In the Old Testament its destruction is prophesied in the "day of the Lord". This day has not come yet - it begins at the outpouring of God's judgement upon the earth recorded in Rev 6:12 (CP Rev 6:12-17). Babylon will be destroyed by the great earthquake and fire under the seventh vial judgement at the end of the tribulation, prior to Christ's second coming (CP Rev 17:1-6, 12-17). Here we see Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, as the symbol of a vast apostate religious system which will be destroyed by the ten kings of the ten future kingdoms in the middle of the tribulation. Clearly scriptures prove that Babylon refers to two distinct entities.

Babylon the city does not presently exist in the form attributed to it in Rev 18. However, there is no doubt whatever that God's word will be fulfilled, therefore it will be rebuilt before it is destroyed again, according to scripture (CP Zech 5:5-11). Here we see the future rebuilding of Babylon prophesied by Zechariah - "wickedness" will be built a house in Shinar. *Shinar* is the land in which Babylon is situated (CP Gen 10:10). The wind in the women's wings, and having wings like the wings of a stork, in Zech 5:9-11, symbolizes the speed with which Babylon will be rebuilt and restored to its former glory. At the time of preparing this study Babylon

has been partly rebuilt where it previously stood in the land, once part of Assyria, that is now modern Iraq. Antichrist will rise up from Assyria, and Babylon will be his seat of government (CP Isa 10:27; 14:24-27; 30:27-31; 31:4-9; Dan 11:36-45; Mic 5:3-6 with Isa 14:3-6 and Rev 17:18). It is not without significance that Babylon was the scene of the first great apostasy against God when Nimrod built the Tower of Babel (CP Gen 10:8-10; 11:1-9). Babylon will also be the scene of the last great apostasy which will result in its complete and utter destruction. It will be cast down forever, never to be built again (CP Jer 51:24-26, 37-49, 59-64 with Rev 18:21-23).

Babylon the literal city itself will not be responsible for the death of every saint and prophet slain on earth throughout history. But the religious, commercial, and political systems embodied in Babylon will be guilty (CP Rev 18:24).

Babylon the literal city is also referred to as "the great whore" (CP Rev 19:1-5). The great whore referred to here is Babylon the literal city. All nations have drunk of the wine of her fornications, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her also (CP Rev 18:1-3). The rejoicing in heaven over the fall of Babylon in Rev 19:1 is in response to the command to heaven to rejoice in 18:20 (CP 18:20 with 19:1). Many in the church believe the great whore referred to in Rev 19:2 is Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, of Rev 17, but that is incorrect because that great whore, who symbolizes an apostate religious system, will be destroyed by men, not by God (CP Rev 17:12-17). An apostate religious system cannot be destroyed by an earthquake and fire, like a literal city. "... *and her smoke rose up for ever and ever*" applies to the city, not the apostate religious system (CP Isa 13:19-22; Jer 51:5-8, 25-26; Rev 14:8; 18:5, 8-9, 17-19; 19:3). Furthermore, as we learned in our study on Rev 17:7-17, the apostate religious system, symbolized by the great whore, will be destroyed by the ten kings in the middle of the tribulation, while the destruction of Babylon the literal city, will occur under the seventh vial judgement at the end of the tribulation, just prior to Christ's second coming and the battle of Armageddon (CP Rev 16:17-19).

The destruction of Babylon the literal city presages the second coming of Christ, the battle of Armageddon, and thus, the fulfillment of Daniel's seventieth week (CP Rev 19:11-21). This portrays the second coming of Christ with all the angels of heaven and saints of God, for the battle of Armageddon. This is the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies (CP Isa 10:20-27; 11:4; 13:6-16; 14:4-6, 9-11, 16-20, 24-27; 30:30-33 (*tophet means a great funeral pyre*); 34:1-17; 63:1-6; Jer 30:1-11; Eze 38:1-3, 17 - 39:7; Joel 3:1-2, 9-16; Mic 5:1-15; Zech 14:1-7, 12-15 with 2Th 1:7-10; Rev 19:19-21). In the context of the prophecy in Eze 38 and 39, *Gog* represents Antichrist, and *Magog*, the nation he rules - Assyria. Antichrist is the king of the north - Assyria. He is called *the Assyrian* in scripture, and also the *king of Babylon* (that part of Old Testament Syria where Babylon is located, is

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now modern day Iraq (CP Isa 10:24; 14:4, 25; 30:31; 31:8; Dan 11:40; Mic 5:5-6). In Rev 20:8 *Gog* and *Magog* describe hostile nations aligned with Satan in the last great rebellion against God at the end of Christ's millennial reign on earth (CP 20:8).

We learn from Zech 14 that at Christ's second coming he will return to the Mount of Olives from which He ascended to heaven at His first advent (CP Lu 24:50-51; Ac 1:9-12). The Mount of Olives will split in two and create a great valley, into which the remaining half of Israel will flee for protection from Antichrist's armies, and the outpouring of God's wrath upon the earth (CP Zech 14:1-5). We also learn from Isa 63 that although all the angels of heaven and saints of God accompany Jesus to the battle of Armageddon, they do not fight the battle with Him. Jesus singlehandedly defeats Antichrist and his armies, together with Satan and the false prophet (CP Isa 59:15-16; 63:1-6; Rev 19:15, 19-21). The battle of Armageddon will last only one day (CP Isa 30:26; Zech 14:6-7). Only one sixth of Antichrist's forces will be spared (CP Eze 39:1-7 (KJV)). The blood that is shed will flow for a distance of two hundred miles, or approximately 320 kilometres, at a depth of 1.2 metres "... up to the horses bridles" (CP Rev 14:19-20). It will take seven years to burn the weapons of war as firewood (CP Eze 39:8-10). It will take the whole of Israel seven

months to bury those killed in the battle notwithstanding that the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field will also eat the dead bodies (CP Rev 19:17-18 with Eze 39:11-20). Antichrist's forces will not only die by Christ's hand. They will also die from a plague sent by God that will eat away their flesh, and they will slay each other as well (CP Zech 14:12-13; Eze 38:21).

All these things are predestined to take place after the church is raptured exactly as the angel from Christ told John in Revelation 1. When they have all been completed, Daniel's seventieth week will be fulfilled. After the battle of Armageddon Antichrist and the false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. Satan will be bound in chains and cast into the bottomless pit – a prison of demon spirits – during the thousand years reign of Christ on earth (CP Rev 20:1-3). At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed from the pit for a short while and will deceive nations hostile to God into joining him in the last great rebellion against God (CP Rev 20:7-10). *Gog* and *Magog* here describe those hostile nations. They will besiege Jerusalem and attack God's faithful ones. God will send fire down from heaven and destroy them. Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire where Antichrist and the false prophet are, to be tormented day and night forever also (CP Rev 20:11-15).