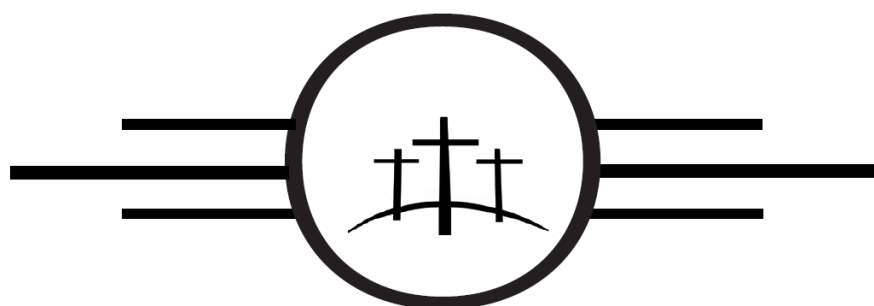


GARY RAY



ON THE PROPHETIC HORIZON





N E X T O N T H E
prophetic horizon

NEXT ON THE PROPHETIC HORIZON

I Am A Watchman
Publications

I Am A Watchman Publishing
Union City, California

ISBN #9781645503217

NEXT ON THE PROPHETIC HORIZON

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The I Am A Watchman ministry desires to equip and encourage believers, reach the lost, and see individuals prepared for the return of the King.

I Am a Watchman Publications
www.IAmAWatchman.com

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN# 9781645503217

First Printing, May, 2020
I Am A Watchman Publishing



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This discipleship resource has been prepared by Gary Ray for the I Am The Watchman ministry. Special thanks to Dillon Burroughs and Joe Kerr for writing sections for this project. Joe serves as Managing Editor for the ministry and Dillon assists with content development, co-hosts the View From The Wall program (with Joe Kerr), and leads the growing social media arm of the

The *I Am A Watchman* ministry has blessed individuals in more than 180 countries. Communication platforms include radio, websites, podcasts, and multiple social media sites. The desire is to encourage and equip believers, and see all prepared for the return of Jesus.

This book was prepared in response to the many questions we have received on the theme: *What are the next key prophecies to be fulfilled?* It is our hope that this resource (and all *I Am A Watchman* resources) will provide answers to questions and embolden faith. It is our particular hope that this resource will help individuals who have purchased Rapture Kits, be well-equipped to witness to intended recipients.

Thank you for your prayers and support of the growing *I Am A Watchman* ministry (Ezekiel 33:1-8).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Ray has served in pastoral ministry for more than 30 years. He is a student of the Word and has a passion for presenting Scripture in ways that are interesting and clear—particularly for those with limited or no church background.

Other books by this author include:

- The Discipleship Handbook
- The Story of Jesus
- The Story of Jesus Bible Study
- The Prophecy Book
- What the Post-Rapture World and Church Will Look Like
- Why and How to Preach on Prophecy and Eschatology
- The Grid Plan
- Reasons to Believe.

All of these books are included in the Rapture Kit UDB resource. The books can be found in the Section 04 - Books folder.

Gary is happily married and lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wonderful wife, children and grandchildren. He is a Watchman for the Lord—and encourages you to be one too.

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THE STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK

It is hoped that this book will be instructive to believers in Christ. The desire is to inform and equip believers as they present the message that Jesus has come, and will come again.

To those who are new to the Christian faith, and to those who have not yet made a decision to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the following sections in the back of this book may be especially instructive.

- What all should know about the Rapture
(pages 102-103)
- How to become a Christian (pages 104-109)
- Suggested next steps (pages 110-111)
- A glossary of biblical terms (pages 112-134)
- About the I AM A WATCHMAN ministry
(page 135)
- Links to complimenting resources (page 136)

Please do not hesitate to share your questions and prayer requests by accessing the following address: https://iamawatchman.com/contact_us/

WHAT IS NEXT ON THE PROPHETIC HORIZON?

These are the facts:

- More than 900 Bible prophecies have been fulfilled.
- No Bible prophecy has been shown to be in error. The accuracy rate is 100%.
- The precision and accuracy of fulfilled prophecies should embolden faith and provide even the skeptic with confidence that future prophecies will be fulfilled precisely as foretold.

What follows is a general overview of prophetic events that are looming large on the horizon. The Word is true, signs are abundant, and prophecies will be fulfilled as foretold. May Watchmen be vigilant to watch, warn, and prepare the world for His coming.

“Certainly the sovereign LORD does nothing without first revealing his plan to his servants...”

(Amos 3:7a)

“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will prevail and I will do all that I please.’

(Isaiah 46:10)

SIGNS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAST DAYS

From an article titled, Signs of the Last Days by Dillon Burroughs, radio host, writer and social ministry coordinator for the I Am A Watchman Ministry Team

Jesus said the last days would be marked by particular signs

Are we living in the last days? Jesus told His disciples that certain *signs* would indicate that His return was near. A profile of these signs can be found in Matthew 24:4-31, in a segment of Scripture often referred to as the Olivet Discourse. In this teaching, Jesus shares a list of 12 signs that will precede His Second Coming.

Why do these signs matter for us today? If we can see these signs unfolding or taking place, it provides evidence that the Lord's return is near. We are called to follow Jesus, live fully for Him, expect His return, and share this news with others.

Sign 1: Claims of False Messiahs

After warning His disciples to, "Watch out that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4), Jesus warns against false Messiahs who will deceive many before His return. Verse 5 notes, "For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many."

A quick online search can provide many examples of people who have claimed to be a Messiah or Jesus reincarnated. For example, José Luis de Jesús Miranda claims to be both Jesus and the Antichrist.

There is no doubt false spiritual leaders will continue to arise and increase in the days leading to the Second Coming of Jesus. One of

the greatest spiritual deceivers among them will be the Antichrist, a global ruler who will arise during the seven-year Tribulation period that will occur prior to Christ's Second Coming.

Sign 2: Wars and Rumors of Wars

Matthew 24:6 mentions “wars and rumors of wars” as a sign of the last days. In the twentieth century, at least 108 million people were killed in wars. Still today, our headlines constantly update us on the latest global conflicts.

However, Jesus also encouraged His followers not to be alarmed at wars. He noted, “Such things must happen, but the end is still to come” (Matthew 24:6). We can expect war but are taught not to let war “alarm” or concern us in such a way that we do not live out God's will for our lives.

Sign 3: Famine

In 2016, 11 percent of the world was considered undernourished. While this number is lower than studies from 20 years earlier, 11 percent of the world's population represents 815 million people.

Technology has provided increased nourishment for many people worldwide, yet famine continues to plague many nations today. This sign, though a general one, could certainly fit our modern world.

Sign 4: Natural Disasters

Verse 7 notes “earthquakes in various places.” In 2017, the most recent year recorded, there were 1,455 earthquakes. The Jerusalem

Post also recently investigated concerns regarding the next “big one” some experts predict could soon take place in Israel.

Studies show there has been an increase in higher magnitude (6.0+) quakes and volcanic activity in each 20-year period (i.e., 1910-1930, 1930-1950, 1950-1970, etc.) in the last 120 years. This statistic is significant as Jesus noted there will be an increase in natural disasters (including a “shaking of the earth”) just before He returns.

Revelation II mentions a severe earthquake that will take place in Jerusalem (a happening most believe will happen toward the end of the seven-year Tribulation period). Revelation II notes that a “tenth of the city” will collapse and survivors will “give glory to the God of heaven.”

According to Matthew 24, this may be one of many severe earthquakes during the last days. Of special note is the earthquake referenced in Revelation 16:18. That earthquake will be the greatest earthquake to impact the earth in recorded history.

Sign 5: Christian Persecution

Matthew 24:9 shares the world’s attitude toward believers in the last days: “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.”

This verse highlights three ways believers will be treated:

- persecuted: “persecuted”
- martyred: “put to death”
- despised: “hated by all nations”

Christian persecution is already noted as being at concerning levels. More than 50 nations restrict or prohibit missionary activity.

That's more than one-fourth of the nations in the world! This will only continue to increase as we near the end.

Sign 6: People Turning Against the Faith

Matthew 24:10 adds, "At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other." Even people who claim to be Christians will turn against other believers, betraying and hating one another. In today's churches, we often note the increase of unbiblical beliefs and attitudes. Such activities will become more common in the last days. This deception will also take place at the hands of "false prophets" (Matthew 24:11).

Sign 7: Increased Wickedness

The seventh sign Jesus mentions includes "the increase of wickedness" (Matthew 24:12). Wickedness will rise, but will not prevail. In contrast, Jesus notes, "the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

The distinctions between those who truly love God and those who oppose Him will become increasingly clear. There will no longer be room for the "lukewarm" faith mentioned among the people of the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3 that, sadly, is found in many churches today. People will be forced to either take a bold stand for Christ or stand against those who live for Jesus.

Sign 8: Global Witness

During these trying days, Jesus mentions there will be an incredibly

positive accomplishment—global evangelism. Matthew 24:14 shares, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

This “end” refers to Jesus returning at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period. This is clarified in the following verses that refer to “the abomination that causes desolation” that will take place at the mid-point of the Tribulation. During the Tribulation, the world will hear the gospel, though many will reject the message.

The evangelistic efforts noted above indicate that many will come to faith in Jesus after the Rapture. Though persecution will be intense, a revival will unfold. Zach. 12 notes that “Those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” This will include many Jews, such as those mentioned in Revelation 7.

This should cause us to live prepared for Christ’s return. We are called to live every moment for God’s glory, sharing His grace with everyone we can until He comes.

Sign 9: The “Abomination that Causes Desolation”

What is the “abomination that causes desolation”? In Matthew 24:15, Jesus connects this concept with the prophet Daniel. In Daniel 9:27, we find, “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

This prophecy refers to the covenant that the future Antichrist will make regarding peace in Israel during the future seven-year Tribulation. At the middle of this time, three and a half years, the Antichrist will enter the rebuilt Jewish temple in Jerusalem, forbid

daily sacrifices and the worship taking place, and command all people to worship him. Compliance will be tied to the taking of a “mark” on the hand or forehead (Rev. 13).

By including this reference, Jesus clearly indicates this “end”—His Second Coming—will come after the Tribulation period. The judgment of this period will be “unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again” (Matthew 24:21).

Sign 10: Widespread Destruction

Verses 17-28 describe some of the widespread destruction that will take place during the second half of the seven-year Tribulation period. It will include:

- fleeing from Judea (v. 16)
- trouble for pregnant women and nursing mothers (v. 19)
- great distress (v. 21)
- false Messiahs (v. 24-25; similar to v. 5)

Verse 22 summarizes the devastation of this judgment: “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive.”

Sign 11: Darkness

Verse 29 reveals that just before Christ’s Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation, there will be a time of darkness. This sign has ties to similar phrases from prophets found in the Old Testament and in the book of Revelation.

For example, Isaiah 13:10 mentions, “The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light.” Ezekiel 32:7 adds, “When I

snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun...”

Revelation mentions judgment through darkness in both 6:12-13 and 8:12. Similar to the darkness that served as a sign of judgment during the plagues against Egypt, darkness will again occur as a judgment prior to Christ’s Second Coming.

Sign 12: Christ’s Second Coming

Verses 30-31 conclude with “the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” The twelfth sign is the return of Christ. Unbelievers will “mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven” (v. 30).

Angels will sound a loud trumpet and gather the “elect” (those who became believers during the Tribulation period) from the earth.

Many post-tribulation interpreters believe this is the same event as described in Paul’s Rapture passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. However, the Rapture and Second Coming are clearly two events.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Jesus raises believers who have died and all living believers to be with Him in heaven. At His Second Coming, Jesus comes with His angels and those whom He Raptured to defeat Satan and establish His Millennial Kingdom on earth.

What about Today?

Jesus concluded His teaching on the signs of the last days by stating, “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door” (verses 32-33).

These signs were mentioned both for those who will live during the Tribulation as well as for those of us living today. When we see our world moving closer to these events, we are compelled to live fully for Christ and to share Him with others. For believers, prophecy should prepare us, not scare us.

Jesus promised “my words will never pass away” (v. 35). His prophecies will come true. Let’s live accordingly today, passionately following Him and boldly declaring His message.



THE RAPTURE

The term Rapture indicates a swift catching up or rescuing of God's people before the outpouring of wrath during the Tribulation. The English term Rapture comes from the phrase, "caught-up," found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The Greek text of the New Testament translates the phrase, *harpazo*, meaning to seize or to catch or snatch up. The Latin translators of the Greek New Testament Bible translated that word, *harpazo*, *rapturo*. The Latin, *rapturo*, became the root word for the English term *Rapture*.

Through the Rapture, Jesus will catch up His church so that they will not have to experience the upcoming time of tribulation and wrath. John, the writer of the book of Revelation, said it this way: the church will be "kept from the hour of testing that shall come upon the world" (Revelation 3:10). Paul, writing of the quick and sudden nature of the Rapture wrote:

"Behold I show you a mystery we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment in the twinkling of an eye...for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised...and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

Writing to the Thessalonian Church, Paul wrote:

"For the Lord himself will 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" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

This is what Jesus said about the Rapture in Matthew 24:40-41:

“There will be two in the field, and then suddenly one will be left.”

“There will be two women grinding at the mill. One will be taken, and one will be left.”

In Luke 12, Jesus spoke of having a sense of expectancy regarding His return.

In Matthew 24, Jesus spoke of the need to be watching, waiting, and ready for His return.

The Rapture in the Old Testament

There are many allusions and references to the Rapture in the Old Testament. The Fall Festival *the Feast of Trumpets*, for example, foreshadows the Rapture. The phrases, *no one knows the day or the hour* and *the thief in the night* are associated with that ancient Festival, as is the blowing of the trumpet, the days of awe, and the idea of new beginnings for all humanity. These associations have Rapture and tribulation connotations.

The Old Testament book, *The Song of Solomon*, also has allusions to the Rapture. The book profiles an unworthy bride who is told to wait for the return of the brilliant Bridegroom. However, she does not remain watchful, and when the Groom returns, she is not ready. He comes like a thief in the night and she, not being ready, is left behind.

Other Scripture that touch on this theme include the Lord’s parable of the ten virgins, His teaching on the wedding banquet, and the Old Testament accounts of how Enoch and Elijah were suddenly *caught-up* into heaven. Many stories, phrases and book themes point to, and lay a foundation for, the Rapture.

Scriptural Support for the Pre-tribulation Rapture View

Historically, there have been three prominent views regarding the timing of the Rapture. The I Am A Watchman ministry concurs with the majority of Bible scholars and teachers who hold that the church will be raptured (caught up to be with Christ) at some point before the commencement of the seven-year tribulation period. Noted below is the Biblical foundation for that position.

- The Tribulation describes a period of suffering unsurpassed, “such as was not since there was a nation, no, nor shall be” (Dan. 12:1). The Tribulation period will be a time of wrath (Rev. 6:16-17, 11:18; 14:19; Zeph. 1:15, 18). However, we see in 1 Thess. 5:9 that the Church is “not appointed unto wrath, but unto salvation.” The Rapture is the Lord fulfilling His promise to rescue His Church (believers) from the coming “wrath.”

“The church will be “kept from the hour of testing that shall come upon all the world.” (Rev. 3:10)

- Scripture notes that the Holy Spirit 1) dwells in the hearts of believers 2) holds back or restrains Satan and 3) will one day be taken away. The taking away of the Spirit/Restrainer points to the Rapture, as removing the Spirit will require removing committed Christians from the earth.

“You know what restrains him [Satan] now...For... He [the Holy Spirit] Who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way...” (2 Thess. 2:6-7)

This taking away of the Spirit is linked to the removal of the Church and the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 supports the pre-tribulation view:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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 (precede) 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 Corinthians 15:51-55 supports the pre-tribulation view:

“Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”

- Many Scriptures note the “Jewishness” of Tribulation events profiled in the Bible. It is said to be the time of Jacob’s trouble,” it concerns “Daniel’s people,” a “false Messiah,” the city of Jerusalem, the twelve tribes of Israel, the “son of Moses,” and a “flight on the Sabbath.” The Church is not specifically mentioned in the book of Revelation after the judgments begin.

- Jesus' teaching on the end times (Matt. 24) indicates that the timing of the Rapture is immediately after the 'Birth Pains,' and before the beginning of the Tribulation.

“Immediately after the distress of those days... he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds... “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken, and the other left. Therefore, keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matthew 24:29-44).

WHEN WILL THE RAPTURE HAPPEN?

Scripture stresses that “no one knows the day or the hour” of the Lord’s return (Matt. 24:36). Scripture also stresses the importance of readiness—and that how servants who are found doing the right thing, the right way, at the right time, when the Lord returns will be blessed (Luke 12:40; 21:36).

Some have taught that certain prophecies need to be fulfilled before the Rapture. Among the suggestions are the Gog-Magog war noted in Ezekiel 38-39, the rise of the Antichrist, the destruction of Damascus, and the building of the third Temple. However, there are NO Scriptural requisites to the Rapture. Affirming this truth, Theologians have coined the phrase, “the doctrine of imminence.” This means the Rapture can happen at any time and therefore, Christians should maintain a sense of expectancy regarding the return of Christ.

In referencing the Rapture, Jesus emphasized expectancy and readiness. This is clear in the following parables: the thief and homeowner (Matt. 24:42-44), the servant, the Master and the wedding banquet (Luke 12:35-37), the wise manager (Luke 12:41-46), and the 10 bridesmaids or virgins (Matt. 25:1-13). The Old Testament book, Song of Solomon also alludes to this truth as the unlikely bride (who represents believers) is told the Groom will depart for a time (this represents the church age) but will return (this is the Rapture). In the story the bride is not ready and is left behind when the Master does return.

Spiritual questions for the reader to consider: 1) are you confident of your own spiritual readiness? If Jesus returned today would you be found ready? If not, consider what must be done to ensure your readiness and 2) do you have a profound concern for those who are lost and a sense of urgency to share the Gospel

so all are prepared for the return of Jesus? If not, pray that God gives you a heart for this. Blessed are those who pray, “Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God.”

Questions and answers about the Rapture

- **Will Jesus return once or twice?** This can be confusing. Many have used the phrase, The Second Coming as a general term focusing on *that* Jesus will return, but not, *when* He will return. Some have linked the phrase, ‘The Second Coming,’ to the Rapture, and some to the ‘Glorious Appearing’ (a phrase linked to Titus 2:13 and Revelation 19-20, where Jesus returns to earth, vanquishes the enemy, then sets-up the Millennial Kingdom). Will there be a Second Coming? YES, at the end of the Tribulation period. Will there be a Rapture? YES, before the beginning of the Tribulation. Is Jesus returning twice? Yes, in a manner of speaking. Jesus will return “in the clouds” to “catch up” faithful followers “in the air” (1 Thess. 4:16-17). That event is known as the Rapture. At the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will return and build His Millennial Kingdom on earth (Rev. 19-20). A few additional distinctions between these two events are noted below:
 - » At the Rapture, Jesus’ return is marked by joy and celebration (1 Thess. 4:16-17). At the ‘Glorious Appearing’ Jesus’ return is marked by war, wrath, and judgment (Revelation 19).
 - » At the Rapture, Jesus returns for His people. At the ‘Glorious Appearing,’ Jesus returns with His people.
 - » Verses that reference the Rapture focus what will happen to believers (they are ‘caught up’ to be with the Lord). Verses that reference the ‘Glorious Appearing’ focus on what will happen to the enemies of God (particularly the Antichrist and False Prophet).

Note: The Rapture event will happen suddenly—No prophecies need to be fulfilled before Jesus returns to rescue His Church. The Second Coming (the ‘Glorious Appearing’) can only happen after many prophecies are fulfilled. These prophecies are outlined in the book of Revelation and include: the rise of the Antichrist, the Mark of the Beast, the sealing of 144,000 witnesses, and the rebuilding of the third Temple.

Why do some speak of the lateness of the hour?

The phrase is used to indicate that the day of the return of the Lord is near. Prophecy teachers note this truth by stating the hour is late, or, the prophetic clock indicates the hour is late. The following verses indicate that believers should maintain a state of readiness for the Lord can return at any time:

- “The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind...” (1 Peter 4:7a)
- “You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!” (James 5:8-9)
- “Remember, I am coming soon!...” (Revelation 22:7a)

Do Old Testament stories foreshadow the Rapture?

In general, a rapture is God’s plan to save the faithful from judgment. We see this in the story of Moses (he and his people were saved from the plague of death in Exodus 11), in the story of Noah (he and his family were saved from the flood in Genesis 7), the story of Lot (he and his family were saved from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19), and in several others. The idea of God saving His faithful followers from

the terrible tribulation of the last days is in perfect harmony with how God has worked through the ages.

Do Old Testament weddings somehow point to the Rapture?

Noted below are 4 parallels between ancient Jewish weddings and the Rapture of the Church:

1. In Hebrew culture, the Father determined the day and hour of the wedding banquet. Often, only the Father knew the day and the hour (see Mark 13:32)
2. In Hebrew culture, there was a waiting period between the betrothal and the wedding banquet. Many argue this represents the current church age—the period from Pentecost to the Rapture. When Jesus returns the church age will cease (Rom. 11:25), raptured believers will rejoice, and the 7-year Tribulation will begin.
3. During this waiting period the Groom would prepare a home for his Bride (see John 14:1-3)
4. At the time chosen by the father, the Groom was sent to receive his bride (who was to be in a state of readiness for this day). As the groom approached her home the shofar would sound. Note that Luke 12:35 states that the Bride of Christ (the Church) must be ready for the Groom's arrival. In fact, when the world hears the trumpet sound (1 Thess. 4:16) it will be too late to prepare for the return of the Lord.

Is today's 'Church' mentioned in the book of Revelation?

Yes. However, the I AM A WATCHMAN team joins with the scholars who teach that the book of Revelation speaks of future events,

is largely written in chronological order, and that the last mention of the church is in Revelation 4 (before a great crowd is seen in heaven—which is a reference to the Rapture).

Is the Rapture mentioned in the Olivet Discourse?

The Olivet Discourse (found in Matthew 24-25) is the longest recorded teaching by Jesus on the end times. This great teaching, however, can be difficult to follow as Jesus discusses the destruction of the Second Temple, the Rapture, the woes of the days leading up to the Tribulation (birth pangs), and the Second Coming/Glorious Appearing, without clear introductions to these topics. In fact, some of the information in this Discourse is not presented in chronological order. However, it is believed that references to the Rapture are found in Matthew 24:36-44 and Matthew 25:1-13.

Is the word *rapture* in English Bibles?

No, however, there are several well-embraced doctrines surrounding terms that are not in the English Bible (such as: missions and Trinity). Key church doctrines are not built on single words (as the Bible is now available in hundreds of languages), but on teachings that have strong Scriptural foundations. The word Rapture is not in the original text, but in the first language translation of the text (Latin) the word Rapturo is used, and, according to Tommy Ice, director of the Pre-Trib Study Center, the first seven English translations of the Bible (prepared between 1384-1608) all translated the Greek word, *harpazo* (1 Thess. 4:16), departure, meaning, the sudden departure of believers. The I AM A WATCHMAN team joins the growing number of Bible scholars who teach that the term Rapture, though not found in English Bible translations, has a strong biblical foundation.

Is the Rapture a teaching less than 200 years old?

It is true that some trace the beginning of the Rapture teaching to John Darby's ministry in the early 1800's. However, Bible scholars note that there are formal teachings on the Rapture in the writings of the early church fathers in the second century A.D. Of primary importance, however, is the abundance of first century Scripture verses that reference a Rapture (some are noted below). A few quotes and substantiating facts (drawn from the book, *Dispensationalism before Darby* by William C Watson) are noted below:

- » From Denys 'van Leeuwen, a 15th century Dutch Carthusian monk: "The brethren will be transferred into Paradise, in which are Enoch and Elijah. And in this way they will be preserved unharmed from the persecution of Antichrist."
- » Writings from The Apostolic Brethren, a persecuted monastic order, 1316 (Old English): "In a moment in ye twinkling of an ey...in the sownyng of the last trumpe shal be the lugement...The daye of our lorde shal come...O howe blessed and how happy shal he be that now entendeth to the poure langwysshying nedy people....for our Lorde wil delivere them therefore from alle daungler..."
- » From Nathaniel Homes, a 17th century author: "The resurrection of those which slept in Christ, and the rapture of those whi shall be left alive....shall translate them into heaven..."
- » From Peter Sterry, Member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1648, *The Clouds in which Christ Comes*:

“The second coming of Christ, is, as the days of Noah. The Lord Jesus...shall be...an Ark to those which are taken into Christ, lifting them high above all miseries toward Heaven...”

- » In his book, History of the Christian Church (1884), eminent Church Historian Peter Shift notes that the following early (pre fourth century) church fathers believed in the Millennium, the rise of Israel and the Rapture: Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius and Lactantius.
- » The second century works, The Shepherd of Hermas and The Apocalypse of Elijah reference the Rapture.

The Rapture teaching dates to the time of Christ. Jesus spoke of it, Scripture notes it, and Paul and the Apostles taught it. The Rapture teaching should motivate believers to do two things 1) ensure they are spiritually ready for the return of the Lord 2) wisely warn the lost that the Rapture can happen at any time, and try to lead individuals into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

For Watchmen the question is: Are you doing everything possible to reach the lost and prepare the world for the return of Christ?

THE BEMA SEAT JUDGMENT

The Bible speaks of several last days or end times judgments. These are The Bema Seat Judgment, The Sheep and Goats Judgment, and The Great White Throne Judgment. The first of these future events is the Bema Seat Judgment. The books of Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians reference this judgment. In the book of Romans, we read:

“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat...So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:10-12).

Writing of the same event to the Church at Corinth, Paul wrote:

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The judgment found in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10-12 is often referred to as the BEMA Seat Judgement because the phrase *judgment seat* is derived from the word BEMA in the original Greek text. The term *Bema* is a word picture of a stage or raised platform where an official renders judgment. In the ancient Greek world, it was the place where exceptional athletes received their reward. In this sense, the Bema Seat has a positive connotation. It was not a time or place when the Judge declared whether or not a person won a race; it was a time when the Judge rewarded athletes and announced what the winner had won.

The Bible teaches that all who accept Jesus into their heart as Lord and Savior will one day stand before God in what is known as the Bema Seat judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12 and

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 reference this event. This time of judgment is not to determine if a person is a true believer—it is a time to examine a believer’s life work. God will examine every word and achievement. 1 Corinthians 3 speaks to this in poetic terms noting:

“[Our] work will be shown for what it is because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames” (1 Corinthians 3:13-15).

Only that which is done, said, or given, in support of the Lord’s work, will survive the fire at the Bema Seat Judgement. That which survives will be commended and serve as our reward. Those who lived for self rather than to honor the Savior will stand in shame. Scripture notes that the faithful will receive crowns similar to athletes receiving a crown as a reward for doing well in the Olympics.

“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.” (James 1:12)

Those whose life works survive the holy fire will receive the smile of God. There can be no greater reward than to hear the Father say, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

WHEN WILL THE BEMA SEAT JUDGEMENT TAKE PLACE?

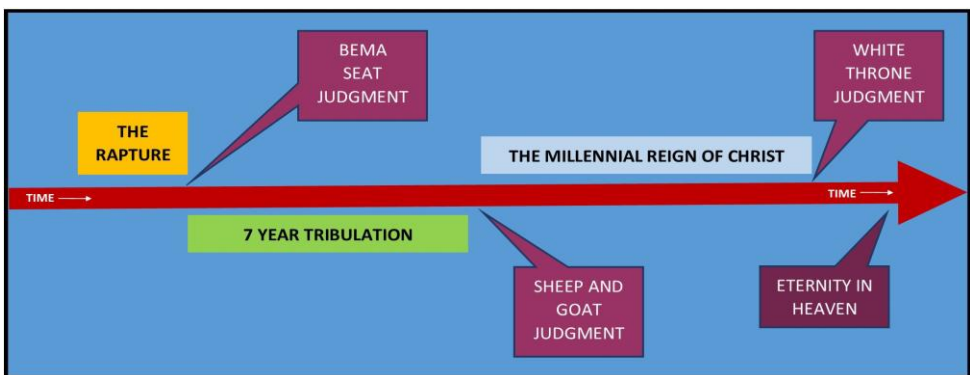
The timing of this event is not specifically noted in Scripture. However, verses such as Revelation 22:12 seem to connect this event with the Rapture.

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

It is logical to presume that the Bema Seat Judgement will take place in heaven, soon after the Rapture, after believers receive their glorified bodies. 1 Corinthians 15 may link the Rapture with receiving a glorified body and the victor’s reward.

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?’ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:50-57).

The Bema Seat Judgment awaits believers. The wise will ensure that they live well and finish well for Jesus.



THE PSALM 83 WAR

READERS MAY WISH TO REFER TO THE GLOSSARY IN THE
BACK OF THIS BOOK WHILE READING THIS SECTION

“O God, do not remain silent; do not turn a deaf ear, do not stand aloof, O God. See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. ‘Come,’ they say, ‘let us destroy them as a nation so that Israel’s name is remembered no more.’ With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot’s descendants. Do to them as you did to Midian...Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like chaff before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze...Cover their faces with shame, Lord, so that they will seek your name” Psalm 83.

The prophecy

The Psalm 83 prophecy indicates that the ten nations or people groups surrounding Israel will conspire, form an alliance, and plan to “destroy...the nation so that Israel’s name is remembered no more.” As the text is more than 2600 years old, Psalm 83 uses ancient names to reference hostile groups. Their contemporary names appear below:

- Tents of Edom = [descendants of Esau] Palestinian refugees and Southern Jordanians
- Ishmaelites = Saudi Arabians
- Moab = Palestinian Refugees and Central Jordanians
- Hagrites = Egyptians
- Gebal = Northern Lebanese

- Amalek = Arabs South of Israel
- Ammon = Palestinian Refugees and Northern Jordanians
- Philistia = Palestinian Refugees and Hamas of Gaza Strip
- Inhabitants of Tyre = Hezbollah and Southern Lebanese
- Assyria = Syrians and perhaps Northern Iraqis
- Children of Lot = Moab and Ammon

The apparent outcome

Implied is that the nations surrounding Israel will launch a first strike, but Israel, though outnumbered, will prevail. God will grant favor (and bring victory to) Israel's army (Ezekiel 37:1-10b), but the world will not perceive Israel's victory as being supernatural. This is different than how Israel's victories in the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog war and Battle of Armageddon conflicts will be perceived. Many believe the Psalm 83 war includes (or precipitates) the destruction of Damascus and the expansion of Israel's borders, and lays the foundation for the Gog-Magog war of Ezekiel 38-39.

Why Psalm 83 is important

Many consider Psalm 83 to be a kind of marker to aid in understanding where the world is on God's prophetic time-line. Those who hold that the Psalm 83 prophecy has not yet been fulfilled believe the events in the Psalm precede, and are connected to, other prophecies. In a sense, Psalm 83 then is viewed as a principle domino which, when put in motion, facilitates the movement of other waiting dominoes. In this chapter, I will refer to the prophecies still in waiting as **SET A**.

Several notable teachers hold that the events profiled in Psalm 83 have already been fulfilled. Those who hold this position believe Psalm 83 does not reference a single battle or conflict, but rather, is a summary presentation of hostile actions against Israel in the last days (consider that since 1948, Israel has been attacked many

times by groups noted in Psalm 83). Generally, those who hold that the Psalm 83 prophecy is already fulfilled look to another set of prophecies (**SET B**) as being next in the prophetic time-line.

A listing of SET A and SET B prophecies

SET A prophecies:

- The ten nations or people groups noted in Psalm 83 will attack Israel. The war will expand into Syria, and Damascus will be destroyed (Isaiah 17).
- The borders of Israel will be expanded (Ezekiel 23; Isaiah 19; Obadiah 19) to fulfill the covenant noted in Genesis 15:18.
- When threatened, Israel will launch a preemptive strike against Elam, a region in Iran (Jeremiah 39).
- With borders expanded and threats neutralized, Israel will feel secure and become the ***nation without walls*** referenced in Ezekiel 38:11.
- Motivated by the hope of “plunder” (Ezekiel 38:12) and enraged by setbacks (particularly in Syria and Iran), the Gog-Magog coalition will form and attack Israel from the north (Syria). This conflict is profiled in Ezekiel 38-39.
- God intervenes and supernaturally dispatches Israel’s enemies when the nation is about to be destroyed.
- Chaos in the region is quelled by a “peace covenant” (Dan. 9:27) between Israel and “the many.” This covenant is brokered by a new world leader who will later become known as the Antichrist.

SET B prophecies include:

- Damascus will be destroyed (Isa. 17).
- When threatened, Israel will launch a preemptive strike against Elam, an area of Iran (Jer. 39).
- Motivated by the hope of “plunder” (Ezekiel 38:12), the

Gog-Magog coalition will form and attack Israel from the north (Syria). This conflict seems to be led by Russia and is profiled in Ezekiel 38-39.

- The prophecy regarding the sense of peace and security that Israel enjoys before the beginning of the Ezekiel 38-39 war may already be fulfilled *if peace and security are to be understood as confidence in their military strength, which is a possible interpretation.*
- When Israel is in peril, God will intervene and supernaturally dispatch Israel's enemies.
- Israel's borders will expand (as noted in Ezekiel 23; Isaiah 19; and Obadiah 19), but the timing is unclear.
- Chaos in the region is quelled by a "peace covenant" (Dan. 9:27) between Israel and "the many." This covenant is brokered by a new world leader who will later become known as the Antichrist.
- It is possible the first three points happen almost simultaneously.

There are four primary schools of thought regarding the interpretation of Psalm 83:

- 1) Some believe Psalm 83 is not prophetic and was written relatively soon after battles noted in 2 Chronicles 20. This position holds that Psalm 83 memorializes past battles, not prophesies of future ones. However, as the battles in 2 Chronicles 20 involve less than half of the combatants listed in Psalm 83, most Bible scholars do not believe 2 Chronicles 20 completely fulfills the Psalm 83 prophecy.
- 2) A small percentage of believers hold that Psalm 83 references the animosity nations have toward Israel (as

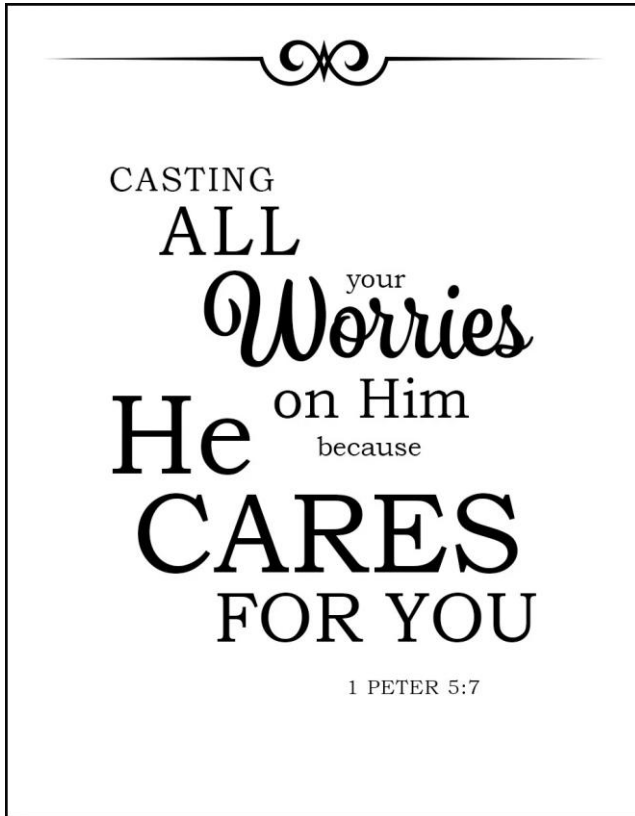
opposed to a war with Israel). Those holding this position believe that though strongly implied, Psalm 83 does not explicitly state that hostile nations attack Israel. They “growl,” they “conspire,” and they “plot...for the destruction of Israel,” but the text does not specifically note that nations attack. Therefore, this position holds that Psalm 83 is not a prophetic reference to war.

- 3) A growing number of believers hold that Psalm 83 prophecies were fulfilled in the 20th century. Those who hold this position (advanced by Amir Tsarfati and other notables) teach that the Psalm 83 prophecy was fulfilled during the war for independence (1948-49), during the 1967 war, or that the fulfillment of Psalm 83 prophecy occurred through a series of 20th Century conflicts. Individuals who hold this position believe the next prophecies to be fulfilled are found in **SET B**.
- 4) The traditional position is that Psalm 83 prophecies are yet future. This position is held by teachers such as Bill Salus and Dr. David Reagan. This position holds that Psalm 83 is connected to border-expansion themed verses (found in Ezekiel 23; Isaiah 19; Obadiah 19 and Genesis 15:18) and references a profound, well-coordinated attack by all ten nations and people-groups. Individuals who hold this position believe the next set of prophecies to be fulfilled are noted in **SET A**.

Conclusions

- In this writer’s opinion, Points 3 and 4 are the most likely interpretations of Psalm 83.
- God has a plan, and His plan is perfect. God’s plan will unfold in the way and time that is best.

- Believers should monitor developments in the Middle East, and based on what is happening, anticipate what prophecies are about to be fulfilled.
- Many of the prophecies noted in this section can be fulfilled rapidly or simultaneously. World events can change quickly. Current alliances are subject to change. Former friends can become fierce enemies overnight. Watchmen are to remain watchful and prayerful.



THE DESTRUCTION OF DAMASCUS

*From an article titled, Damascus the Damned, by Joe Kerr,
Managing Editor for the I Am A Watchman ministry*

About Damascus

Damascus is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, founded in the third millennium BC and over subsequent centuries has been part of 42 different states. Some have improved, and some have impoverished; the next will annihilate Damascus the damned.

Isaiah the prophet wrote, “A prophecy against Damascus: See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins.” (Isaiah 17:1)

Other translations state: “the city of Damascus will disappear!” [NLT]; “Damascus will cease to be a city.” [ISV]; “Behold, Damascus is no longer a city; it has become a heap of ruins.” [Berean Study Bible]

The New American Standard Bible takes an ominous tone: “Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city.” The KJV uses the apt description of the city’s final state, calling it bluntly, “a ruinous heap.”

The Good News Translation isn’t such good news for Damascus. “The LORD said, “Damascus will not be a city any longer; it will be only a pile of ruins.”

The Contemporary English Bible puts it pointedly, “This is a message about Damascus: Damascus is doomed! It will end up in ruins.”

Ruinous heap. Heap of rubble. Wasteland. Barren. Ruins.

The oldest continuously inhabited city in the world will become desolate

The city of Damascus has seen its share of extreme highs and lows, but what happens in the end that turns the world's longest continuously inhabited city into a ghost town? More accurately, what wipes the city off the map? It's not merely uninhabited; it's "removed from being a city."

Many famous tourist attractions are called 'ruins' and draw millions of visitors. They include: the Coliseum in Rome; Machu Pichu, Chichen Itza, Stonehenge, Ta Prohm - famous for its scenes in the film Tomb Raider; the Luxor Temple in Egypt; Easter Island, Petra, Pompeii, the Ajanta Caves in India, and many others are in some cases literally just a few stones stacked up amidst tangles of jungle or carved rocks. They're impressive, and they make us wonder how ancient civilizations built them. But in the end, they are ruins. The civilizations who built them are in most cases gone; extinct or exterminated.

We wonder what could have happened that made them vanish. In a few cases we know; Pompeii was buried under ash and lava when the volcano erupted. Other civilizations are just gone; their language, culture, and people are no longer here. There is no other way to put it – gone. Damascus will be gone as well. There is one major difference; we know it's going to happen.

The history of Damascus

Damascus rose to prominence in the eleventh century BC under the Aramaeans, and the city grew into a thriving metropolis by the second century under Roman control. Damascus, the western terminus of the Silk Road, was a vital trade and cultural center.

In 476 A.D., Damascus came under Byzantine rule and became renowned for its breathtaking beauty and splendor. Legend tells of the Prophet Muhammad, who on his journey from Mecca to Syria, observed Damascus in the distance, and turned away saying, “a man should only enter paradise once, and that is upon his death.”

The Islamic Rashidun Caliphate conquered Damascus in 634 A.D., and it fell to the Umayyad Caliphate in 661 A.D., after which the city’s main mosque was erected and the area became a hub for economic and religious activity in Syria. The flourishing Damascus, affluent and splendid, was declared the capital of the world’s largest empire, which at its zenith stretched from Spain in the west to Afghanistan in the east.

After the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750, the Abbasid dynasty took control and moved Syria’s official capital to Baghdad. Damascus began a slow decline until the 12th century when it enjoyed another resurgence under the Zengid dynasty. By the 1500s, the city had fallen on hard times again and was captured by the Ottomans.

Damascus declined further under Ottoman rule; the economy stagnated, and the city became less and less relevant in both industry and influence. The Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923, and languishing Damascus fell into French hands. Syria gained independence in 1945.

Syria’s economy has vacillated since its founding, but suffered greatly in the 1980s - real GDP per capita plunging over 20%. Limited recovery during the 1990s and 2000s brought some growth, but all that (and much more) has been unraveled by the brutal Syrian Civil War. The conflict, raging since 2011, has left Syria as a whole, and Damascus in particular, shattered, shelled and destitute, but still inhabited. And according to Isaiah, doomed.

The Future of Damascus

Will the city of Damascus be destroyed? Yes. God's word never fails (Isaiah 55:11). His promises always prove true (Psalm 18:30). His guarantees are "yes and amen" (1 Corinthians 1:20). None of God's prophecies have ever been wrong (Luke 24:44). Damascus will be destroyed. The place will become a heap of ruins, but unlike the places listed earlier, no one will ever visit Damascus again. Why? The answer is not clear.

It could be a nuclear detonation makes it impossible for humans to live there. It could be that chemical attacks continue, and no one wants to live there. It could be that people evacuate the region because the war leads to another economic catastrophe, and the city cannot function because people flee Damascus to find jobs, food, and safety. Like many small towns when industry moves, the town eventually dies. Regardless of the how, we know the what – Damascus will become "a ruinous heap."

Is there any hope for residents in Damascus? Yes, there is, the same hope you and I have – Jesus Christ.

- "In His name, the nations can put their hope." (Matt.12:21; Isaiah 42:4)
- "...Christ is the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

The immediate future of Damascus is dark and ominous. It is being poisoned by its own government. It could be invaded or re-invaded by Iran, or Russia, or some group we don't even know about at the time. Some believe Israel will destroy Damascus; either a pre-emptive strike or in self-defense, or to drive out one of several other forces intent on using the city as a forward base to attack Israel.

The Bible does not state when or how, but, we do know this – Isaiah was right about the birth and death of Christ, the rebirth of the nation of Israel, and many other events. He won't be wrong about Damascus.

What Should Christians Do?

Christians should pray for the people who live in Damascus. John 3:16 applies to them as much as to those who live in Mexico, Africa, or Nebraska. God loves the citizens who live there. He loves their children and families. His salvation is available to all.

Pray for the oppressors of Damascus. As difficult as it is to imagine, God loves the people who are destroying the city and killing its residents. God desires all to repent, ask Christ for forgiveness, and be saved.

Pray for repentance and revival. In the past, numerous kings ordered their people to repent; some were believers in Jehovah, but not all. Josiah (2 Kings 23:25), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:1-3), Cyrus (Ezra 1:2), Ahasuerus (Esther 4:3), Darius (Ezra 6:25-27), Ahab (1 Kings 21:27), Hezekiah (Isaiah 37:1), Eliakim (2 Kings 19:2), Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:12), and the unnamed king of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-7) all called for national repentance. Revival and redemption is possible.

In more recent times (March 30, 1863), American President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a National Day of Prayer and fasting. He eloquently said,

“We have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become

too self- sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for forgiveness.”

Nations have turned to God before, it can happen again, and God would welcome them. Pray for the oppressors and haters of the citizens of Damascus.

Raise your voice. If a bill or motion arises in Congress or the Supreme Court, or some referendum is circulated that empowers the UN to do something ungodly; make a call to your representative or write an email. Share God’s truth in love.

Finally, speak up for peace. I’m not talking about just any peace, I’m talking about the “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), and the “peace that passes all understanding” (Philippians 4:7,8). The following axiom is true: *Know Him, Know Peace. No Him, No Peace.* The Gospel of Jesus Christ is still the only hope for the world. Share it, teach it, post it, pray it.

Finish Well Watchmen.

THE EXPANSION OF ISRAEL'S BORDERS

The ancient promise

In Genesis 15, we read that God revealed to Abraham the boundaries of the future nation of Israel.

18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying,

***“To your [t]descendants I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates:***

***19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the
Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the
Girgashite and the Jebusite. (Genesis 15: 18-21)***

The promised boundaries were presented by God to Abraham in Genesis 15, affirmed to Isaac in Genesis 26, declared to Jacob in Genesis 28, and confirmed by Moses in Exodus 23:31. The Promised Land began to be possessed in the days of Joshua, it became a strong and unified nation in the Days of David, and its borders were expanded in the days of Solomon. However, the borders of Israel have never matched the vast footprint God noted in Genesis 15.

Some suggest that the borders of Israel will not expand much beyond post-1967 war borders until the Millennial Kingdom (which will follow the Tribulation period). However, several prophecies suggest that borders will expand as a result of war or military engagements—something that is not expected to be a part of the Millennial Reign of Christ. Many then, believe that the borders of Israel will expand and contribute to the sense of security the prophecy of Ezekiel 38:10 notes Israel will enjoy before the Gog-Magog invasion (which precedes the Battle of Armageddon and the Millennial Kingdom). The two probable scenarios are **1)** borders will be expanded as a result

of Israel's response to the attack profiled in Psalm 83 or **2)** borders will expand in battles following the conflict profiled in Psalm 83. This could include the destruction of Damascus (Isa. 17), a devastating strike on an important military site in Elam (Iran, Jer. 49), and possibly the Gog-Magog war referenced in Ezekiel 38-39.

Which countries will be impacted by the expansion of Israel's borders?

- **Saudi Arabia:** "...I will stretch out my hand against Edom...I will lay it waste, and from Teman to Dedan [Saudi Arabia] they will fall by the sword. I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel...they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD." (Ezekiel 23:13-14)
- **Jordan:** "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will sound the battle cry against the Ammonites [Jordan]; it will become a mound of ruins, and surrounding villages will be set on fire. Then Israel will drive out those who drove her out,' says the LORD" (Jeremiah 49:2).
- **The region of Saudi Arabia and Jordan:** Saudi Arabia and Jordan "Turn and flee, hide in deep caves, you who live in Dedan [Saudi Arabia], for I will bring disaster on Esau [Southern Jordan]..." (Jeremiah 49:8)
- **Egypt:** "In that day the Egyptians...will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians..." (Isaiah 19:16-17a)
- **Syria/Damascus:** "Behold, Damascus is about to be removed from being a city...The cities of Aroer will be deserted... The fortified city will disappear...the land will be a desolation... At evening time, behold, there is terror! Before morning they are no more" (Isaiah 17:1-3).

How will the expansion of Israel's borders impact area nations?

- Individuals will be displaced: “Like a lion [Psalm 83 confederacy] coming up from Jordan’s thickets to a rich pasture land [Israel], I will chase Edom” (Jeremiah 49:19).
- Egypt: “The land of Judah will become a terror to Egypt...In that day, five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing allegiance to the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of Destruction. In that day, there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the LORD near its border” (Isaiah 19:17-19).
- The Arab world will be enraged: “Oh, the raging of many nations— they rage like the raging sea! Oh, the uproar of the peoples—they roar like roaring waters!” (Isaiah 17:12)

— I CAN DO —
ALL THINGS
THROUGH
CHRIST
== WHO ==
STRENGTHENS ME

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

THE JEWISH TEMPLE (PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE)

Few can appreciate what the Temple means to the Jewish people. Many wrongly believe the Temple is similar to a capital building, such as the White House, or perhaps a national landmark like the Statue of Liberty. To the Orthodox Jewish people, the Temple is much, much, more. The prophet Ezekiel noted the importance of a future Temple:

“And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant...and I will place them [the Jews] and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.” (Ezekiel 38:26-28)

For the Jewish people, the Temple is a key component of their connection with God. The centerpiece of the Jewish Temples profiled in Scripture was a sacred room, known as the Holy of Holies, which many believed housed the very presence of God. The sacrificial and priestly systems associated with the Temple were, for the people, tangible reminders of God’s promise to bless and protect His people. For the Hebrews, no building, monument, landmark, or national treasure compared to the importance of the Temple. The destruction of the Temple in 70 AD was a catastrophic blow to the Hebrew people.

It is vital for the nation of Israel, and for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, that a new Third Jewish Temple is built, on the Temple Mount, and before the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation period.

History of the Temple

God established a proto-temple in the days of Moses (circa 1450 BC). This mobile Temple (a tabernacle) was tent-like, with large colored walls of fine cloth defining the perimeter. Gold and silver were used to create key artifacts in the Temple, such as a washing bowl, candelabras, the mercy seat, and the Ark of the Covenant. In the Ark was Aaron's staff, manna, and the 10 Commandments. The workmen who fashioned these pieces were specially anointed by the Spirit of God (Exodus 31).

Aaron served as the first High Priest; his male descendants became the Levitical priests. The tabernacle was the pride and joy of ancient Israel. But in time, the Jews desired a permanent structure to replace the mobile Tabernacle. The permanent structure would be known as the Temple.

Less than 500 years after Moses, David began to prepare for the building of the first Temple. The plans were glorious. For years the finest supplies were gathered. David's son Solomon had the privilege of adding to those supplies and coordinating the construction project.

The Bible's description of Solomon's Temple - also called The First Temple - suggests that the building was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The highest point on the Temple was about 207 feet. It was an incredible structure.

1 Kings notes it took 185,000 men seven years to build the Temple. To complete the same project, to the same standards, would cost roughly 1.3 Trillion dollars in today! Solomon assumed massive debts in building the Temple. For the supplies and craftsmen,

Solomon gave King Hiram twenty towns of Galilee (I Kings 9:11). 1 Kings 6:1-38 details the glory of the Temple:

“And Solomon overlaid the inside of the house with pure gold, and he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and he overlaid the whole house with gold, until all the house was finished. Also the whole altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary he overlaid with gold. In the inner sanctuary, he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. Five cubits was the length of one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the length of the other wing of the cherub; it was ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. The other cherub also measured ten cubits; both cherubim had the same measure and the same form. The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was that of the other cherub. He put the cherubim in the innermost part of the house, and the wings of the cherubim were spread out so that a wing of one touched the one wall, and a wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; their other wings touched in the middle of the house. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

He carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, in the inner and outer rooms. The floor of the house he overlaid with gold in the inner and outer rooms. For the entrance to the inner sanctuary, he made doors of olivewood; the lintel and the doorposts formed a pentagon. He covered the two doors of olivewood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers; he overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubim and upon the palm trees. So also he made for the

entrance to the nave doorposts of olive wood, in the form of a square, and two doors of cypress wood; the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. On them, he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold evenly applied upon the carved work. He built the inner court with three courses of hewn stone and one course of cedar beams. In the fourth year, the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. And in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the “house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. Solomon was seven years in building it” (1 Kings 6:1-38).

King Solomon dedicated the new Temple in 953 BC. At the dedication, Solomon shared an inspired speech and prayer, which were followed by an enormous offering and a national public celebration and feast.

“So Solomon held the feast at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days. On the eighth day, he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their homes joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David, His servant, and to Israel His people” (1 Kings 8:65-66).

Israel Falls Into Apostasy

Sadly, because of idol worship and apostasy, the glory of the Temple faded over the centuries. For more than two hundred years, God sent prophets to warn the people to “remember their first love,” but the stubborn and willful people would

not. The prophet Jeremiah warned that the Temple would be destroyed, even naming the destroying army (the Babylonians), noting what would happen to the people (who would be exiled), and how long the exile would be (70 years). Still, the people would not repent.

In fulfillment of prophecy, the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 587-586 B.C. The Babylonians torched the Temple, tore down its pillars and looted the precious artifacts. 2 Kings 25:8,9 describes what happened:

“In the fifth month...Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord, the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.”

The Exile

The Babylonian army carried away tens of thousands of Jewish prisoners. These prisoners served King Nebuchadnezzar as slaves to the land of Babylon. The Hebrews were displaced (exiled) from their land for 70 years - first in Babylon, and then in Persia, when King Cyrus defeated King Nebuchadnezzar’s successor. After 70 years, many of the exiled Jews began the 900-mile trek back to Jerusalem.

When the exiles returned to Jerusalem, they saw that their beloved Temple had been destroyed, and the fortifying walls around the city were in shambles. Notably, Ezra and Nehemiah led the people in completing Temple and wall rebuilding projects. *Several important stories about this period of history are recorded in the books of Daniel, Esther, Nehemiah, and Ezra.*

The Second Temple

Amazingly, the Temple artifacts that were looted by the Babylonian army were preserved rather than melted down and used to finance Nebuchadnezzar's extravagant building projects. Cyrus defeated the armies of Babylon and took the Temple artifacts to Persia. In time, the artifacts were returned to the Hebrews. After more than 70 years and traveling more than 1700 miles, Temple artifacts were once again in Jerusalem.

At the urging of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel began construction on the second Temple in 521 BC. The project was completed in 515 BC. The Temple included an outer courtyard, a courtyard for women, and a courtyard that enclosed the altar for burnt offerings. Near the inner courtyard was the Court of Israel, which was a small strip extending along the width of the inner courtyard that only men could enter. Only priests were permitted beyond the Court of Israel, which is where sacrifices were made. And only the High Priest was allowed beyond that to the Holy of Holies.

Though the building of the second Temple was miraculous, the Temple itself was viewed as humble when compared to the first Temple. Scripture notes that those who remembered the first Temple cried when the Second Temple was consecrated and opened to the people.

The Years of Decline and King Herod's Restoration Project

The Temple fell into disrepair over the next three centuries. In 168 BC, Jerusalem was invaded by the Syrian army. The Syrian leader, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was so evil, Scripture portrays him as one who foreshadows the Antichrist of the book of Revelation.

After a three-year revolt by the Jews, led by Judas Maccabaeus,

Jewish forces defeated the much larger Syrian army and forced the enemy out of Jerusalem. The Temple was cleansed and reopened, although without the grandeur of the Temple dedicated by Ezra and Nehemiah.

About 150 years later (cir. 19 BC), King Herod began a Temple restoration and enlargement project. The prideful Herod initiated the grand project as much to honor himself as to please God or his Jewish subjects. The construction employed more than 10,000 workers and took more than 80 years to complete. It was this Temple Jesus referenced in the notable “Olivet Discourse” (Matthew 24:1,2).

The Temple restoration project was completed in 63 AD and destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The Romans completely demolished the structure. Because the mortar which held the Temple foundation stones in place was mixed with gold, the soldiers dismantled Herod’s Temple stone-by-stone, just as Jesus prophesied. The destruction of the Temple was so complete that today, the exact location is disputed.

A.D. 100—1917

The destruction of the second Temple occurred in 70 AD and launched the Great Diaspora (the dispersion of the Jews out of Israel and into countries around the world). In fulfillment of prophecy, Jews were persecuted and displaced—first by the Romans, then Islamic Caliphates, then crusaders, then the Ottoman Empire, and in the early 20th Century, the British.

In time there were few Jews left in Israel. The Hebrew language almost became extinct; it was seldom written or spoken. Even the weather changed. The land once “flowing with milk and honey” became arid, desolate, dead.

During WWI when the Ottoman Empire started to crumble, the British began to speak of establishing a state for the Jewish people. In November 1917, the British Government stated its support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine when it released the Balfour Declaration, which read in part:

“His Majesty’s Government views 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 and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.”

In May 1948, the United Nations established a portion of the former land of Israel as a new permanent state for the Hebrew people. Jews from all over the world began to return. The weather changed. Fulfilling prophecy, Israel “bloomed” and is now known as “the Land of Trees.” It has become a major exporter of produce to Europe, but it has not been easy for the Jewish people. The fledgling nation was attacked soon after the United Nations approved the establishment of the State of Israel. It was attacked in 1949, 1956, 1967, and 1973. However, in each conflict, God helped Israel prevail.

Since the mid-eighth century, the Temple Mount area has been considered a holy site by Islam. It is the supposed location of Muhammad’s ascension to heaven, an ancient Islamic prayer chapel and later, the site of the Al Aqsa Mosque and Compound—considered the third most holy site in Islam.

In 1967, without provocation, multiple nations attacked Israel. Though outnumbered and outgunned, Israel prevailed and by

the end of the fighting, had gained control of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount area. This was of extreme concern to the Arabs and Muslims. Israel was concerned as well, knowing that its nation of 2.5 million could not withstand an onslaught from armies throughout the Arab and Muslim world (which numbered more than 800 million at the time). To ease tensions, Israel pragmatically ceded control of the Temple Mount to Jordan, as it remains today.

Perhaps this was a necessary move at the time, but it is a source of great consternation in the Orthodox Jewish world today. Orthodox Jews believe construction on the Third Temple must begin soon, and most insist it must be on the Temple Mount, precisely where the Al Aqsa Mosque is currently located.

Since 1927, Orthodox Jews have been preparing to build a third Temple. The importance of rebuilding the Temple is tied to its perceived role in the redemption of the world, which Orthodox Jews believe can only take place once the Temple is complete. Gershon Salomon, director of the Temple Mount Faithful has said, *"[Building the Third Temple] is an act which must be done to complete the redemption of the people of the Bible in the Land of the Bible. I cannot imagine an Israeli State or Israeli life in this country without the Temple Mount in the center of this life."*

The modern-day Sanhedrin, the self-appointed religious leaders of Israel, have taken steps to prepare for Temple practices and services in the near future. A solid gold menorah – an exact copy of the menorah in Solomon's Temple, stands in the courtyard inside the walls of the Old City near a Hebrew academy. Tourists capture selfies in front of it and Jewish children play in its shadow. It is not a replica. It is intended to one day adorn the Third Temple.

Rabbi Hillel Weiss, spokesman for the Sanhedrin, explained that the Temple provides a link between the land and the Divine:

“When people think about sacrifices, they think about animals and blood, but most were from plants grown around Israel.”^[5] The renowned Temple Institute also supports the dream to rebuild the Temple. It holds reenactments of Temple ceremonies to train those who are from the priestly classes known as the Kohanim.

Old and New Testament writers reference a third Temple. If I may be so bold, the building of a third Temple is not something that will be pleasing to God. The Temple may be grand—some suggest that the third Temple will be 36 times larger than the expansive Temple built in the days of King Herod. However, God will not be impressed. The third Temple will be a place where Jewish religious leaders will sacrifice animals for the forgiveness of sins - but in vain.

Temple leadership will not recognize Jesus as the Savior and Son of God, nor His ultimate sacrifice on the cross some 2000 years ago. Daniel chapter 9 and Jesus in Matthew 24, both note that at the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will stand in the Temple and proclaim himself to be God. This will end the Jewish sacrificial system. The third Jewish Temple will be defiled. It will house the “Abomination of Desolation” Jesus and Daniel spoke of, and will become an object of shame.

THE GOG-MAGOG WAR

The coming invasion

Ezekiel 38-39 predicts that a broad coalition of hostile forces, led by “Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (Ezek. 38:2-3) will attack Israel. The huge army will attack Israel from the north, seemingly through Syria. The decisive battlefield is the “mountains of Israel, which have long been desolate” (Ezek. 38:8). The purpose of the invasion is to “plunder and loot,” and destroy the people of Israel (Ezek. 38:12, 16).

When Israel’s destruction seems imminent, God will intervene and bring victory by sending torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on the advancing army (Ezek. 38:22). God’s hope is that through this clearly supernatural victory, many will be brought to faith in Him. Ezekiel 38:23 notes, “I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Who or what is Gog?

Gog and Magog are descendants of Noah and mentioned in genealogy listings in Genesis 10:2, 1 Chronicles 1:5 and 1 Chronicles 5:4). The terms used in Ezekiel 38 likely references the people groups associated with the descendants of the Gog and Magog listed in Genesis 10. The Gog referenced in Revelation 20 likely references the hostile and rebellious actions and spirit associated with those people groups.

The timing of the Gog-Magog invasion

The Bible provides general clues regarding the timing of the Gog-Magog conflict, but not specific information. Ezekiel uses the terms, “latter years” ([Ezek. 38:8](#)) and “last days” ([Ezek. 38:16](#)) in reference to the timing. This indicates that the 2600-year-old prophecy could not be fulfilled before 1948—the year Israel reestablished itself as a sovereign and independent nation. Most believe that large sections of the book of Ezekiel present prophecies in chronological order. Ezekiel 36 profiles a displaced Israel (600 BC—1948 AD). Chapter 37 presents a revived or restored Israel (1948—). And as the last part of chapter 39 and beginning of chapter 40 present information on the Millennial Kingdom (which follows the Tribulation), it is through that chapter 38, through the first part of chapter 39, presents information on the period just before, or in the early part of, the Tribulation period.

The nations involved in the conflict

[Ezekiel 38:1-6](#) lists the ancient names of those invading Israel. The list includes Rosh, Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush, Gomer, and Beth-Togarmah. Most believe the contemporary designations are:

1. Magog = Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan (and possibly Afghanistan)
2. Rosh = Russia
3. Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Beth-Togarmah = Turkey (and possibly Azerbaijan, Armenia)
4. Persia = Iran
5. Ethiopia = Sudan

6. Put = Libya (and possibly Algeria and Tunisia)

Notably absent from the above list are the nations surrounding modern-day Israel. Many believe these nations are under Israeli control (as a result of the Psalm 83 war) at the onset of the Gog-Magog invasion. Others believe these nations are referenced in the phrase, “the many nations with you” (Ezekiel 38:6b).

The Leader

Ezekiel 38:2-3 notes that the leader of the coalition of nations that march against Israel is “Gog, prince of Rosh.” Gog is likely a title, such as Prince or General, or a symbolic term, associated with evil, rebellion, or violence.

Does Rosh = Russia?

The words ROSH or RUSSIA are not found in the New International Version, the King James Version, the English Standard Version and several other notable Bible translations of Ezekiel 38:3. The word ROSH is present in the New King James, New American Standard Version, Amplified Version, and the Darby translation of Ezekiel 38:3. The variance in translations is attributed to how translators choose to interpret the word “Rosh” or “Ros” (as a noun or as an adjective).

In his book, *Northern Storm Rising*, Dr. Rhodes reports that the noun form points to a geographical area and the adjective points to a title or position (such as top, leader or chief). Accordingly, the NASV translators chose to translate noun form of “Rosh,” and the NIV translators chose to use the adjective form. Both forms are acceptable.

It is worthy to note that in the 5th century AD, the Byzantine Church referenced the people living in the area now called Russia as *the Ros*. Also, Ezekiel 39:1-2 states the invasion would come “from the remotest parts of the north.” Cartographers note that the land far north of Israel is modern-day Russia.

The Aftermath

The magnitude of the destruction of the God-Magog war will be staggering. Never in history will a victory be so decisive. This, of course, is the result of God’s intervention on Israel’s behalf. Israel will bury dead for seven months, and weapons collected from the battlefield will provide fuel for the country for seven years (Ezek. 39:9-12).

Israel, though vastly outnumbered and out-gunned, will be the undisputed victor. The stunning victory will be viewed as supernatural by Israel and many in the world. Through this victory, God proclaims He is the defender of Israel and desires all to enter into a relationship with Him.

The chaotic outflow may be referenced in the plights associated with the Four Horsemen of Revelation 6. The post-war chaos could also provide an opening for a new world leader (the Antichrist) to step onto the world stage and broker a remarkable “peace covenant” (agreement) for that region (Daniel 9:27). If so, it will be that “peace covenant” that initiates the seven-year Tribulation period.

THE TRIBULATION

The world is approaching a notable period of history—the Tribulation period. The Bible references the Tribulation by many names; Daniel’s 70th week, the time of Jacob’s sorrow, the time of God’s wrath, etc. Jesus prophesied that it would be a time of unprecedented upheaval.

Some believe Bible prophecies regarding judgments appear to indicate God is angry or mean. However, consider this: It is a loving God that warns and disciplines. Only as a last resort does He use drastic measures to prompt individuals to pursue a better path. This writer believes that if the world turned to Christ today, the prophesied future Tribulations would not occur. But God knows that humanity is willful and knows the choices we will make. Sadly, the prophecies will come true. In the last seven years of our history, God will bring tribulation and wrath to the earth. Why? To prompt humanity to repent and receive His offer of salvation. This chapter provides a biblical overview of the Tribulations period events that are prophesied to come.

Tribulation period prophecies
(Not presented in precise chronological order)

- **Israel will enter into a peace treaty:** The Antichrist will impose a “covenant with the many” which will include (and likely focus on) Israel (Daniel 9:27; 8:23-25). It is this ‘covenant’ that initiates the seven-year Tribulation period.
- **Earthquakes:** Great earthquakes will shake the world during

the Tribulation period (Revelation 6:12, 8:5, 11:13, 16:18, etc.). Note: The years leading up to the commencement of the Tribulation period will be marked by an increase in higher magnitude quakes.

- **The third Temple will be built in Jerusalem:** Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John refer to a Temple being in Jerusalem in the last days. This third Temple is referenced in Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:4; and Revelation 11:1-2.
- **Temple sacrifices will be established in Israel in the last days:** Daniel 9:27; 12:11, and Revelation 13 reference this. The completion of the Temple and routine of daily sacrifices must be in place before the mid-point of the Tribulation.
- **Temple sacrifices will be forbidden:** At the mid-point of the Tribulation period, the Antichrist will seize control of the Temple, abruptly end the practice of daily sacrifices, and proclaim himself to be God. (Revelation 13).
- **144,000 believers will be sealed by the Spirit:** The Holy Spirit will ‘seal’ 12,000 Jewish believers from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. This is likely a symbolic number representing a vast and perfect number of believers God uses to evangelize the world (Rev. 7). Along with these sealed witnesses will come two “great prophets” (Rev. 11:3-14). These two prophets will preach with power for 42 months and then be martyred. Many will celebrate their death. Their bodies will lie in the street for three days, after which they will miraculously resurrect and be taken up to heaven.
- **Revival:** During the Tribulation, many will turn to Jesus (Revelation 7:9-17; Daniel 12:10; Zechariah 2:11; Isaiah 19:16-25).

THE JUDGMENTS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION ARE LARGELY DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS OF SEVEN—THE SEALS, THE TRUMPETS AND THE BOWLS OR VIALS. A GENERAL PROFILE OF TRUMPET AND BOWL JUDGMENTS FOLLOW

- **Vegetation decimated:** Revelation 8:7 notes that the first trumpet judgment will bring the destruction of 1/3 of all vegetation.
- **A meteor or comet falls into the sea:** Revelation 8:8-9 notes that the second trumpet announces something falling into the ocean and destroying 1/3 of life in all seas.
- **Wormwood:** Similar to the second trumpet judgment, the third trumpet announces a celestial object falling to the earth, causing fresh water to turn bitter (resulting in many deaths).
- **Reduction of light:** The fourth trumpet judgment brings about a 1/3 reduction of light (from the sun, moon, and stars).
- **Tormenting creatures:** The fifth trumpet announces the coming of scorpion-like creatures from the demon world. These creatures torment humanity, but do not cause death. Some suggest that these creatures will not be able to torment believers in Jesus.
- **Forced worship of Antichrist:** 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13 notes that the False Prophet will force all to worship the Antichrist. Noncompliance will result in persecution and death. Proof of allegiance to the Antichrist will include receiving a mark on the right hand or forehead. The mark will regulate all financial transactions (Revelation 13:17) and prohibit one from entering heaven.
- **Sores on those who receive the mark:** Revelation 16:1-2 notes that those who accept the mark of the Beast, signifying their allegiance to Satan, will contract painful sores (KJV reads, 'boils') on their body.

- **A place of refuge for believers:** Many believe that a location in ancient Petra (located in present-day Jordan) will become a place of refuge for believers (Isaiah 16:1-4; Matt. 24:16; Rev. 12:6,14).
- **A vast army will advance from the East:** The sixth trumpet announces the coming of a great army from the East (two hundred million men). This army advances toward Israel and leaves devastation in its wake (Revelation 9:13).
- **The Euphrates will be blocked or dried-up:** The great river Euphrates will dry up, allowing armies from the East to advance toward Israel (Revelation 16:12).
- **The Antichrist will be mortally wounded:** Revelation 13 notes that the Antichrist will suffer a wound to the head but will recover to the amazement of many. This will be the supernatural work of Satan and will serve to embolden the Antichrist's claim to deity.
- **Judgment on the Woman who rides the Beast:** Revelation 17 (and Jeremiah 50-51) note the judgment on this woman—also called the Whore of Babylon and Mystery Babylon. This judgment falls on a nation (or perhaps a system), not an individual.
- **Life in seas and rivers die:** Revelation 16:3 indicates that remaining life in the sea dies as the second vial of judgment is poured out. Oceans will “become as blood.” The third vial of judgment brings about the death of life in the rivers (Revelation 16:4).
- **Scorching heat:** The fourth vial of judgment brings scorching heat, which causes misery to humans and devastates vegetation.
- **Darkness:** The fifth vial of judgment brings darkness and painful maladies; some translations read, ‘plagues’ (Revelation 16:10-11).
- **War:** War will engulf the earth. The last conflict is the Battle of Armageddon.

- **Victory:** Jesus will intervene when Israel is surrounded by her enemies in the Battle of Armageddon. With a word, Jesus will overwhelm the enemies of God. The Antichrist and False Prophet will be bound and thrown into the bottomless pit. Jesus will begin His Millennial Reign and bring peace and justice to the earth for 1000 years (Revelation 19-21).

The ANTICHRIST will rise to power. Below is a listing of conflicts associated with the Antichrist:

- The Antichrist will rise to world power through cunning, deception, and diplomacy (Daniel 8:23), but will eventually use military force to conquer the world.
- Revelation 13:7 notes that the Antichrist will ultimately achieve “authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.” Revelation 6 records the outbreak of global war resulting in the deaths of one-fourth of humanity (Revelation 6:8).
 - *“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast (Satan’s Antichrist) rising out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns (The book of Daniel explains these represent the ten nations he will rule). On his head is a blasphemous name...The dragon (Satan) gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (Revelation 13:1,2).*
 - *“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan. He will come with power, signs [miracles], and lying wonders” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).*

- *“It was granted to him to make war...and authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.” (Revelation 13:7)*

- Revelation 8-9 seems to indicate spiritual, conventional and nuclear war. Nuclear war fits the descriptions of Rev. 8:7 where it is noted that one-third of the earth will be burn. Revelation 16:2-11 states that “loathsome and malignant” sores will afflict survivors. The wars noted in Rev. 6 and 8 will result in the deaths of more than half of humanity. The army from the East mentioned in Rev. 9 is comprised of “200,000,000 men.”
- Revelation 12-13 notes the persecution of all who believe in Jesus, all Jews, and all who refuse to follow the Beast.
- Some Jews in Israel will flee to a place in the “wilderness” where they will be supernaturally protected by God (Rev. 12:13-14). Many believe this hiding place will be the ancient city of Petra, located inside a box canyon in modern Jordan. There is good reason for this assumption; Daniel 11:41 notes the Antichrist will be prevented from conquering Jordan, who joins the end time rebellion.
- Zechariah 13:8 indicates that the Antichrist will kill two-thirds of the Jewish people during the Tribulation.
- Revelation 12:17 notes that the Antichrist will oppress the “offspring” of Israel; namely, those “who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” This is a reference to those who accept Jesus as Lord during the Tribulation period.
- Revelation 7:9-14 pictures a great multitude of martyrs in Heaven; identified as “the ones coming out of the Great Tribulation...”
- Revelation 17-18 notes an attack on the Whore of Babylon

(also called the woman who rides the Beast). This is a nation or geopolitical religious and economic system that perpetrates evil, but is antagonistic to the nations that support the Antichrist. Many believe Jeremiah 50-51 references God's judgment on this entity.

"Then the angel said to me, 'The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose...' (Revelation 17)"

- Revelation 16-19 profiles the Battle of Armageddon. When victory seems imminent for the armies of the Antichrist, they will be supernaturally destroyed by Christ. Revelation 19 notes that just as armies from the East and North arrive in the Valley of Armageddon, Jesus appears and slays the enemies of God with "the breath of His mouth" (2 Thess. 2:8). Joel 3:16 notes that the Lord will "roar from Zion" and "utter His voice from Jerusalem." Isaiah 10:16 notes that the result will be "a wasting disease." Zech. 14:12 notes that there will be a plague that will cause the flesh of the soldiers "to rot while they stand on their feet. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths." Revelation 19 notes that the Antichrist and False Prophet will be bound and thrown into the lake of fire for 1000 years.

ARMAGEDDON, AND WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM THE GOG-MAGOG WAR

The term Armageddon is one of the best known (and least understood) four-syllable words in the Bible. Some suggest that the term Armageddon references a single battle that is profiled in the book of Revelation. Others suggest it references two or more conflicts, separated by a thousand years. Some argue that Armageddon does not refer to a battle at all, but merely a location. Those who believe Armageddon is a location generally fall into two groups – one believes it is a valley; the other group holds it is a battleground in the mountains. Some believe the Battle of Armageddon is the same as the conflicts mentioned in Psalm 83 and Isaiah 17. While still others link the Battle of Armageddon with the engagements mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 (also called the Gog-Magog War).

In this section, I will present a brief overview of the Battle of Armageddon, and note how this battle compares with the Gog-Magog war.

The Battle of Armageddon

The term Armageddon derives from the Hebrew phrase Har Megiddo, which means “*Mount of Megiddo*.” The word ‘Armageddon’ is found only in Revelation 16:16: “*Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.*” The term references the final battle of the Tribulation (Revelation chapters 16-20, Zechariah 14; Joel 3).

It is likely the term Har Megiddo (or Armageddon) does not indicate a specific hill (har or tell), but rather, a vast plain that had a notable hill. Over the centuries, the location of many fortified military bases surrounding mountain ranges made this plain a favored trade and travel route, and the perfect staging ground for an attack on Jerusalem.

Throughout history, Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley have been ground zero for battles that determined history's course. More than 20 major battles have been fought there. War will engulf the world during most of the seven-year Tribulation period. During the last half of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will unleash his fury against Christians and Jews. The severity of persecution will intensify and crescendo in the Battle of Armageddon. In this Battle, the Antichrist will lead the armies of the world to gather in the valley of Har-Megiddo, and move to attack Jerusalem.

The Old Testament prophet Joel described the scene:

"I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel...Proclaim this among the nations: Consecrate for war; stir up the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears...Bring down your warriors...Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great" (Joel 3:2, 9–13).

The city of Jerusalem will appear to be overwhelmed, but when all seems lost, Jesus will appear. Revelation 1:7a notes that "**every** eye

will see Him.” Matthew 24:30 states that “***all*** the people of the earth...will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This event is often referred to as the ***Second Coming*** or the ***Glorious Appearing*** (Titus 2:13).

With Jesus will be a myriad of heavenly saints in glorified bodies—*those raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation, and believers who died during the Tribulation period*. Jesus will descend from the heavens and place his foot on the Mount of Olives, which will cause an earthquake. Scripture notes that “half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it [will move] toward the south (Zechariah 14:4). Of special note is the fact that when Jesus returns, this destination will be the Mount of Olives, which was the place of his ascension 2000 years ago. At that time the disciples watched Jesus ascend into heaven, and were met by an angel who prophesied: “Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, ***will return in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven***” (Acts 1:11)

Scripture notes that the Battle of Armageddon will not be much of a battle at all. The glorified saints with Jesus witness, but do not engage in the conflict. The armies of the Antichrist watch helplessly as enemies of God fall dead when Jesus simply utters a word (Revelation 19:11-21). The Antichrist will appear to have great power, but all the armies of the world are nothing compared to the awesome power of God.

The Apostle John foresaw the event: “*They [the world’s armies] will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful*” (Revelation 17:14).

The Battle of Armageddon will be a teaching moment and time of vindication. Those martyred for their faith will see judgment come to the Antichrist and False prophet (who will be captured, bound,

and thrown into the fiery pit for 1000 years). Those who chose not to follow Christ will see Jesus in resplendent glory. The Lord will judge the nations that persecuted Israel and tried to destroy her people. The prophet Joel notes: “I [God] will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat [Har- Megiddo], and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of my people...” (Joel 3:2).

After this judgment, Jesus will renew the earth and establish His throne in Jerusalem. The saints who returned with Jesus in glorified bodies will reign with Christ, and believers who survived the Tribulation will live on the new earth, in mortal but rejuvenated bodies, during the glorious Millennial Reign of our Lord.



Comparing Armageddon and the Gog-Magog War

What is clear

Though there is debate regarding the interpretation of some prophetic passages, the vast majority of Bible Scholars agree on the following:

- The Psalm 83 War is NOT the Battle of Armageddon or the Gog-Magog War. The names of the nations or people groups attacking Israel, the scope of the battle, how Israel is victorious in the fight, and the aftermath of the battles are markedly different in the Psalm 83 War, the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16-19), and the Gog-Magog War (Ezekiel 38-39).
- The Battle of Armageddon is profiled in Revelation 16-19.
- Ezekiel's eschatological profile of future Israel is chronological. Chapter 36 promises a renewed Israel. Chapter 37 promises a restored Israel. Chapters 38-39 profile an invasion against a restored Israel. And chapter 40 profiles the Millennial Reign of Christ in Israel.
- The Bible notes that there are TWO battles involving Gog and Magog. There is conjecture regarding the timing of the **first** Gog-Magog conflict, but virtually all conservative scholars agree that this conflict is profiled in Ezekiel 38-39 and will precede the Millennium. The **second** Gog-Magog conflict will take place at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ, and is profiled in [Revelation 20:1-10](#).

Why some believe the Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon and the Ezekiel 38-39 war are the same conflict

Some ministry leaders believe the Battle of Armageddon and the

conflict noted in Ezekiel 38-39 conflict are the same war. What follows is a listing of passages that seem to support that view:

- In both conflicts, vast armies attack Israel.
- In both conflicts, God intervenes and brings about the victory (which is different from the Psalm 83 War where Israel's army, blessed by God, secures victory).
- The depiction of God's wrath in [Ezekiel 38:19-22](#) resembles happenings associated with the Battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16. In both passages, God aids Israel by sending an earthquake, pestilence, fire, and hail fall from the sky.
- The Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon directly precedes the Millennial Reign of Christ, which tracks well with the eschatological chronology in Ezekiel: in chapter 36 there is a promise to renew the land of Israel, in chapter 37 Israel is restored as a nation, in chapters 38-39, Israel is attacked but supernaturally protected, and in chapter 40 the Millennial Reign of Christ begins.
- The immediate aftermath of the wars is similar when comparing [Ezekiel 39:17-20](#) with [Revelation 19:17-20](#).
- The terms Gog and Magog are mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and Revelation 20.
- Historically, many have equated the Gog-Magog War with the Battle of Armageddon.
- The devastating earthquake that flattens every mountain in Ezekiel 38 is very similar to the earthquake prophesied to take place during the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16).

Noted below are passages that show the Battle of Armageddon and the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog conflict to be separate and distinct events:

- More nations are noted in the coalition against Israel in the Battle of Armageddon than in the Gog-Magog conflict.
- In the Gog-Magog War of Ezekiel 38-39, it takes seven months to bury the dead, and Israelis utilize enemy weapons for fuel for seven years. As virtually all place the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation period (just before the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ), there does not seem to be an interpretation allowing for the burying of the dead over several months, or for using enemy weapons as fuel for seven years, during the peaceful Millennial Kingdom.
- God's purpose in bringing victory to Israel in the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War is to bring Israel to repentance so all acknowledge the Lord. God's purpose in bringing victory to Israel in the Battle of Armageddon is to deliver believers from the horrors of the reign of the Antichrist.
- In Matthew 24 and in Revelation 12, those who flee the wrath of the Antichrist run to the hills (as encouraged by Jesus in [Mark 13:14](#)). However, the Gog-Magog War takes place in the mountains (which God will flatten via a supernatural earthquake). This seems to place the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War no later than the mid-point of the Tribulation.
- In the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War, the name of the leader of the armies advancing against Israel is Gog—in Hebrew, the numerical value of his name is 12. In the Battle of Armageddon, the leader of the armies advancing against Israel is the Beast—the numerical value of his name is 666.

- In Ezekiel 38-39, the battle takes place in the mountains of Israel. In the Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon, enemy forces are vanquished in a valley ([Joel 3:2](#)), and a river of blood runs through Israel ([Revelation 14:20](#)).
- The Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War occurs when Israel is enjoying peace and safety; "...a nation of unwallled villages..." (Ezek. 38:11). The Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon takes place at the end of the Tribulation. At that time, the Antichrist is oppressing and threatening to destroy Israel. At that point in history, Israel will not live in peace and safety.
- The stated goal of Gog-Magog invasion forces is to "take spoil." The purpose of armies attacking Israel in the Battle of Armageddon is to destroy the nation.
- The primary direction of advancing armies in the Gog-Magog War is "from the North." In the Battle of Armageddon, enemies attack Israel from all directions.
- At the end of the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus Christ stands on the Mount of Olives—there are no references to a divine presence appearing in the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog conflict.

Questions and Answers for anticipated questions

- **Q)** Is it true that more nations are involved in the Battle of Armageddon than in the Gog-Magog war?
 - **A)** *Yes, more nations are listed as being involved in the Battle of Armageddon. However, it is possible that Ezekiel 38 presents a partial listing of enemy nations (noting only key players or leaders of the engagement). The "every nation of the world" reference associated with the Battle of Armageddon is a general statement*

meaning many nations are involved in the attack. Neither passage provides conclusive evidence to argue for or against the view that the Gog-Magog War is the same as the Battle of Armageddon.

- **Q)** In the Gog-Magog War of Ezekiel 38-39, it takes seven months to bury the dead, and Israelis utilize enemy weapons for fuel for seven years. As virtually all place the Battle of Armageddon at the end of the Tribulation period (just before the beginning of the Millennial Reign of Christ), there does not seem to be an interpretation allowing for the burying of the dead over several months, or for using enemy weapons as fuel for seven years.
- **A)** *In the Gog-Magog War, the dead are buried. In the Battle of Armageddon, the dead are vaporized by the power of God or savaged by birds and wild animals. The differences regarding the dead, and the fact that Israel will use weapons of war for fuel for seven years after the Gog-Magog War, represents reasonably compelling evidence supporting the view that the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are two separate conflicts.*
- **Q)** Is the *purpose of God* in the two conflicts the same? Does the answer indicate anything about the nature of the conflicts?
 - **A)** *God's purpose in bringing victory to Israel in the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War is to bring Israel to repentance and into right fellowship with Him. God's purpose in bringing victory to Israel in the Battle of Armageddon is to deliver believers from the horrors*

of the reign of the Antichrist. Again, these differences represent reasonably compelling evidence supporting the view that the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are two separate conflicts.

- **Q)** In Matthew 24 and in Revelation 12, those who flee the wrath of the Antichrist run to the hills (as encouraged by Jesus in [Mark 13:14](#)). Does this have a bearing on the two conflicts or indicate anything about the timetable of the event?
 - **A)** *The Gog-Magog War takes place in the mountains (which God will flatten via a supernatural earthquake). This seems to place the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War no later than the mid-point of the Tribulation. References to the location of the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are general and do not provide conclusive evidence that these are two different conflicts. Those who argue that Armageddon must take place in the Valley of Jehoshaphat must remember that the engagement will involve millions of soldiers and equipment and will likely occupy the entire region.*

- **Q)** In the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War, the name of the leader of the armies advancing against Israel is Gog—in Hebrew, the numerical value of his name is 12. How does that correspond with the leader(s) in the Battle of Armageddon?
 - **A)** *The leader of the armies advancing against Israel is the Beast—the numerical value of his name is 666. The primary difference in how the key leaders are depicted (more than the difference in the numerical value of*

their names) represents reasonably compelling evidence supporting the view that the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are two separate conflicts.

- **Q)** In Ezekiel 38-39, the battle takes place in the mountains of Israel—the battle does not seem to impact the valleys. Is this significant in determining whether the Gog-Magog war is the same as the Battle of Armageddon?
 - **A)** *In the Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon, enemy forces are vanquished in a valley ([Joel 3:2](#)), and a river of blood runs through Israel ([Revelation 14:20](#)). As noted previously, references to the location of the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon (and the mention of a ‘river of blood’) do not provide conclusive evidence that these are different conflicts.*
- **Q)** In Ezekiel 38-39, war occurs when Israel is enjoying a time of peace and safety. She is described as a “nation of unwallled villages” (Ezekiel 38:11). Does this indicate that Ezekiel 38-39 describes an event different than the Battle of Armageddon?
 - *The Revelation 16-19 Battle of Armageddon takes place at the end of the Tribulation, when the entire world is engulfed in war. This seems to lend strong support for the view that the Gog-Magog War and Battle of Armageddon are separate events. However, in the Hebrew text, the term “safety” can be understood as “confidence.” That is, though there is a threat of war (as there is today), Israel can be at peace and feel safe because they are confident in their military’s ability to check any threat. Also, the*

“peace and security” reference can be the prideful, mocking, sarcastic assessment of the attacker (meaning, they do not believe Israel could withstand their powerful assault). Though not conclusive, the evidence here shows the Gog-Magog War and Battle of Armageddon to be separate events.

- **Q)** Does the stated purpose of the **attackers** indicate that the Gog-Magog War and Battle of Armageddon are distinct events?
 - **A)** *The stated purpose of the leaders of the Gog-Magog invasion is to “take the spoil,” while the purpose of the leaders in the Battle of Armageddon is to destroy Israel. The distinction regarding motive represents compelling evidence supporting the view that the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are two separate conflicts.*

- **Q)** The primary direction of advancing armies in the Gog-Magog is North. In the Battle of Armageddon, enemies move against Israel from all corners of the globe. Does this prove that Ezekiel 38-39 and Revelation 19 are different events?
 - **A)** *The different geographic references regarding the attack do not represent conclusive evidence that the Gog-Magog War and Battle of Armageddon are separate engagements. The reference “from the North” can be a reference to the location of the base of the principal leader, the primary (but not sole) direction of the advance, or the direction that armies from the four corners of the earth will gather and begin their advance.*

- **Q)** At the end of the Battle of Armageddon, Jesus Christ stands on the Mount of Olives, but there are no references to a divine presence appearing at the end of the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog- Magog War. Does this show the two battles to be different events?
- **A)** *The distinction regarding the conclusion of these battles is significant enough to support the view that the Gog-Magog War and the Battle of Armageddon are two separate conflicts.*

REASONABLE CONCLUSIONS

- The Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War is different from the Battle of Armageddon.
- Because the Ezekiel 38-39 Gog-Magog War will take place in the mountains (where God's people will later take refuge), the battle will likely take place before the midpoint of the Tribulation.
- There will be TWO wars associated with the terms Gog and Magog. The first is the war profiled in Ezekiel 38-39, the second is profiled in Revelation 20 and takes place at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ.
- Believers should monitor developments in the Middle East, and based on what is happening, anticipate what prophecies are about to be fulfilled.

THE SHEEP AND GOAT JUDGMENT

There are three future judgments mentioned in the Bible. The first is the BEMA Seat Judgment. Scripture profiles that judgment in 2 Cor 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12 and 1 Cor. 3:13-15. It is for believers only, and will likely take place soon after the Rapture.

The second judgment is the **Sheep and Goat Judgment**, so named because of the language Jesus uses in Matthew 25:31-46 (see below). This judgment will take place at the end of the Tribulation, just after the decisive Battle of Armageddon.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him...All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me...to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something

to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these...you did for me.’

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was...in prison and you did not look after me.’

They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matt. 25:31-46).

A general overview of the events that will lead up to the Sheep and Goat Judgment follows:

- Present-day: The earth will continue to experience what Jesus referred to as birth pains (Matthew 24). There will

be an increase in geologic and volcanic activity, animal die-offs, pandemics, cosmic anomalies, famine, civil unrest, strange weather, and military conflicts. The I AM A WATCHMAN team, and many Bible scholars believe that soon, Jesus will return to rescue His followers (the Church) from the deteriorating world. He will swiftly catch-up faithful believers in an event known as the Rapture.

- Soon after the Rapture, the Antichrist will broker a peace agreement that includes and likely centers on Israel. The signing of this peace agreement initiates the 7-year Tribulation period.
- The Tribulation Period will be a time of unprecedented sorrow. There will be war, plague, great earthquakes, darkness, the poisoning of water, and much more.
- For many months, the world will view the Antichrist as a genius, a hero, and an extraordinary diplomat. However, he will gradually tighten his reigns and increase his control over nations and world systems.
- 3.5 years into the 7-year Tribulation, the Antichrist will proclaim himself to be god and will try to force individuals to worship him by demanding all take the *Mark of the Beast*. Receiving the Mark is tied to a commitment to worship the Antichrist. Those who take the Mark of the Beast can no longer enter into a relationship with Christ and be saved. Those who refuse to take the Mark will not be able to buy or sell and will be labeled enemies of the state. Many will be put to death.
- The Tribulation will end with the Battle of Armageddon. In this battle, the armies of the Antichrist will march against Jerusalem. Though vastly outnumbered, faithful believers in Christ and Jews will make a stand in the city. When all seems lost, Jesus will return, bringing with Him those

Raptured, and the believers martyred during the Tribulation.

- **The Sheep and Goat Judgment** will be on earth, after the Battle of Armageddon, and before the commencement of the Millennial Reign of Christ. Faithful followers of Christ (the sheep) will be invited to live on a renewed earth during His Millennial Reign (Revelation 20:2, 4-5; Revelation 21:5-7; 1 John 5:5 and Revelation 2:11).
- Matthew 25 concludes with information on what will happen to unbelievers (the goats):
“Then He [Jesus] will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...’ Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” (Matthew 25:41,46)

Prayer: Lord, please help me to be found faithful and in right relationship with you when you come to Rapture your church. Lord, help me to know how and when to witness so others will be spiritually prepared for the Rapture. Help me have a heart to help those not taken in the Rapture. Reveal to me what I can leave or hide to draw those who live during the Tribulation, into a relationship with Christ. I pray now for those Tribulation saints. Help them to be strong in their faith – strong enough to refuse to take the Mark of the Beast, and “finish well” as a bold witness for you.

THE MILLENNIUM AND MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

What is the Millennial reign of Christ and who will be in the Millennial Kingdom?

The Millennium and the Millennial Reign of Christ are referenced in Scripture more than 2000 times. Many view Revelation 20 as the principle (if not the sole) reference to the Millennium in the Bible. However, there are more references to the Millennium in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. Scholars note that there are more than 1800 references to the Millennium in the Old Testament and more than 300 in the New Testament. 85% of the books in the New Testament reference the Millennium. The Millennium and Millennial Reign of Christ are subjects that concern the future of earth and believers in Christ. This section provides an informative, encouraging biblical overview of this prominent Bible subject.

Familiar references to the Millennial Reign of Christ

Many familiar Scripture passages reference the Millennial Kingdom. For example:

- Jesus referenced the Millennium in the Lord's Prayer when He states: *"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. **Thy kingdom come**, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matthew 6:9-13).
- The prophet Isaiah referenced the Millennium in this Messianic prophecy: *"For to us a child is born, to us, a son is given, and **the government will be on his shoulders**. And*

*he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Of the greatness of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness.***" (Isaiah 9:6-9)

- In his vision of future kingdoms, the prophet Daniel foresaw the Millennial Kingdom and wrote: *"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever"* (Daniel 2:44).

References to the Millennial Kingdom flow through the Old and New Testaments. A sampling of Millennial Kingdom references follows:

Hallmarks of the Millennial Kingdom

Satan will no longer oppress the earth or God's beloved

- *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things, he must be released for a little while"* (Revelation 20:1-3).

The earth will be restored and renewed

- *"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the*

former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isaiah 65:17-25).

Jesus will reign

- Jesus will reign as King (Isaiah 2:4; 42:1).
- Jesus will serve as King and righteous judge: *“He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off”* (Micah 4:3a).
- Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:1–3). All will freely worship God (Isaiah 2:2-3).
- Jesus will rule in love and with a “rod of iron” (Psalm 2:9; Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

The earth will be at peace

- *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness’”* (Jeremiah 23:5-6).
- The world will be at peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; 32:18).

Believers who survive the tribulation will inhabit the new earth. Joining them will be tribulation period martyrs and believers who are currently in heaven.

- Tribulation period believers will receive special honor (Matthew 25:23; Luke 19:16-19).

- Surviving believers from the tribulation period will live in renewed mortal bodies during Christ's earthly reign (Zechariah 14:16-21; Revelation 20:7-10). Longevity will be the norm.
 - Believers who are currently in heaven with Christ will reign with Him in this Kingdom (Daniel 7:18).
 - *"...For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth"* (Revelation 5:9-10).
 - Believers will possess the Kingdom (Daniel 7:18-27).
 - Believers will lead with Christ as their King (Job 36:7).
 - Believers will serve as judges, officers, and leaders (Psalm 149; Isaiah 60:17).
 - Believers will teach the truth (Psalm 37:29-31; Jer. 3:15).
 - *"...Believers shall be priests of God and Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years"* (Revelation 20:6).
-

All promises and Covenants will be fulfilled

- The Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:1-10): Israel did claim some of the lands God promised to Abraham. However, Israel has never possessed all of the lands God promised in Genesis 15 and Numbers 34:1-12. Consider these promises:
 - On the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram; God promised: *"To your descendants, I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to...the River Euphrates..."* (Genesis 15:18-21)

The prophet Ezekiel reminded Israel: *“Thus says the Lord God: These are the borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph shall have two portions. You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall fall to you as your inheritance. This shall be the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, by the road to Hethlon, as one goes to Zedad, Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim (which is between the borders of Damascus and Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which is on the border of Hauran). Thus, the boundary shall be from the Sea to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. This is the north side”* (Ezekiel 47:13-17).

- Through the prophet Ezekiel God promised: *“On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. This is the east side. The south side, toward the south, shall be from Tamar to the waters of Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. This is the south side...The west side shall be the Great Sea, from the southern boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This is the west side. Thus, you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel”* (Ezekiel 47:18-21).
- Through Moses, God promised: *“If any of you are driven to the farthest parts...from there the LORD your God will gather you...Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you...”* (Deuteronomy 30:4-6)

Covenants will be fulfilled

- As noted above in Genesis 15:18-21, God's covenant regarding the land and future of Israel will be realized during the Millennial Reign of Christ.
- God's covenant with David centers on how his heir would sit on the throne and rule Israel (2 Samuel 7:16). Jesus is the fulfillment of this covenant (which accounts for the recording of his genealogy via both His step-father (Matthew 1:1-17) and His mother (Luke 3:23-38). The Jews acknowledged the covenant when they laid down palm branches and their cloaks as Jesus rode into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-17). However, they wrongly expected Jesus to be a military and political leader that would liberate Israel from the Romans. 2000 years ago, they did not understand that Jesus was preparing to establish a New Covenant, not fulfill the Davidic Covenant. That Covenant will be satisfied during the reign of Christ on earth (Revelation 20:4,6).

God's covenant as profiled through Jeremiah and Ezekiel

- The prophet Jeremiah wrote: *"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* (Jeremiah 31:33).
- The prophet Ezekiel provides additional details: *"You shall*

dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:28).

Life on earth will be different

- Longevity: *“No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old...they shall build houses and...plant vineyards and eat their fruit...” (Isaiah 65:20-22)*
- Docile animals: *“...The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,’ Says the LORD” (Isaiah 65:34-35).*
- Peaceful coexistence: *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:6-9).*
- No War: *“...They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks...nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (Mic. 4:3).* Isaiah 2:4 is a similar passage. There the prophet notes that not only will there no longer be war, but there will be no weapons, nor will battle strategies be taught.

The earth will be different

- *“...I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing...the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying” (Isaiah 65:17-19).*
- A great earthquake will divide Jerusalem into three parts (Revelation 16:18-19). The earthquake will occur when Jesus touches His foot on the Mount of Olives. Water will flow out from the city after the great earthquake (Zechariah 14:4-8). The new millennial temple will stand over this river (Ezek. 47:1-12).
- Jerusalem will be a prominent high point on Earth during the Millennium (Isaiah 2:2). The great earthquake at the Second Coming of Jesus will level mountains and make islands disappear (Revelation 16:20; Isaiah 40:4-5).
- There will be a new fountain of living water: *“In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1).* Zechariah 14:8 notes where the waters will flow: *“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former (eastern) sea, and half of them toward the hinder (western) sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”* The living waters will flow out of Jerusalem in two directions, to the west to the great sea (Mediterranean Sea) and to the east to the Dead Sea (or Salt Sea). Also see Ezekiel 47:1-7.
- This new fountain will impact the Dead Sea: At this time, the Dead Sea has no outlet and is seven times saltier than the oceans. No fish live in the Dead Sea. Ezekiel 47:8-11 notes, however, that the waters of the Dead Sea will be healed: *“Then said he unto me, these waters issue out toward the*

east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that...there shall be a great multitude of fish..."

A new Temple in the Millennium:

- Jerusalem will be a center for worship: *"And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship...on them, there will be no rain..."* (Zechariah 14:16-19)
 - o Ezekiel 40-48 notes that temple worship and sacrifices will resume during the Millennium. Many believe the purpose for these sacrifices is to commemorate the sacrificial work of Christ...It will serve as a stark picture and solemn reminder of the penalty Christ paid in dying for our sins on the cross.
 - *"But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:3).
 - Gentiles will keep the Feast of Tabernacles (which was formerly a feast just for Israel). To do so, individuals will travel to Jerusalem in the fall to "worship the King." Ezekiel 43:7 notes: *"And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne...[is] where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel..."*

- It may be that the Feast of Tabernacles takes on a slightly different meaning during the Millennial Reign of Christ as the focus will no longer be Israel's rescue from Egypt, but rather, how Christ has saved his children from all over the world. The prophet Jeremiah notes: *"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers"* (Jeremiah 16:14-15).

What happens after the Millennial Reign of Christ?

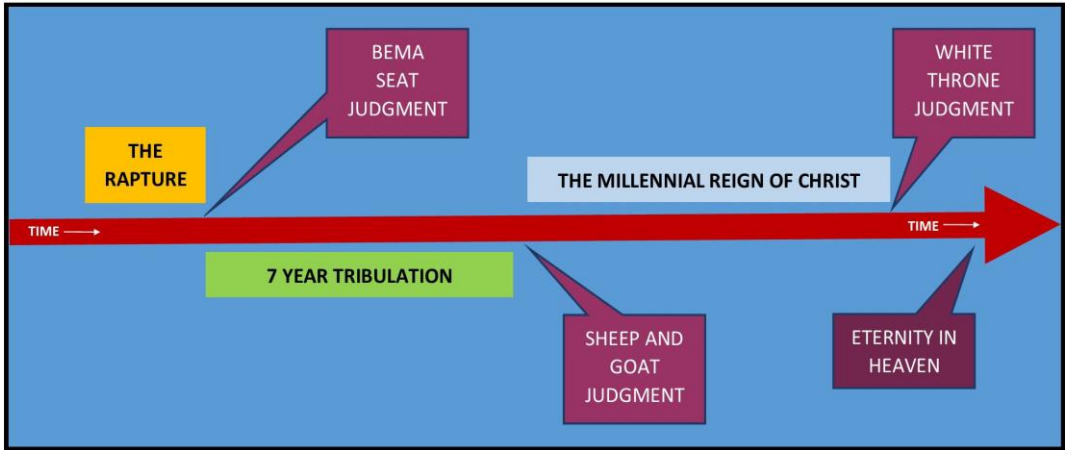
- War and final judgment: *"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever"* (Revelation 20:7-10).
- The Great White Throne Judgment and reward of the saints: *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there*

*was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:11-15). *Note: please see page 99 for additional information on the Great White Throne Judgment.*

Summary:

Knowing the exact timing and scope of some future events may not be possible, but we can know that in the end, good will vanquish evil, and Jesus will reign triumphant. Those who have committed their lives to him will share in his victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT



The Great White Throne Judgment is the third judgment that is mentioned in the Bible. The first is the Bema Seat Judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12). The Bema Seat Judgment will be for believers only and will likely take place soon after the Rapture.

The second judgment is the Sheep and Goat Judgment. This judgment is profiled in Matthew 25:31-46. It will take place on Earth, at the end of the Tribulation period. At this time, individuals who became believers during the Tribulation period will be invited to live on a renewed Earth, with Christ, during His Millennial Reign. Individuals who did not choose to live for Christ will “be cast into the eternal fire” (Matthew 25:41).

The third and final judgment noted in the Bible is **the Great White Throne Judgment**. Revelation 20 profiles this judgment, which is reserved for all non-believers who ever lived.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Revelation 20:11-14).

The Great White Throne Judgment will take place after the Millennium. Satan and the False Prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Then those who lived during the Millennium, but chose not to become a devoted follower of Christ, and the resurrected dead who in life decided not to follow Jesus, will be judged according to their deeds. *The Book of Life* will then be opened. Revelation 20:15 records what happens next.

“...anyone whose name is not found written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15).

All people have an eternal soul and destiny. Those who do not accept Christ in their heart as Lord and Savior will suffer eternal punishment. Those who live for Christ will enjoy eternal blessings in heaven. Revelation 21 touches on the many joyful wonders that await the faithful. 1 Corinthians 2:9 says it well:

“No eye has seen...no ear has heard, and...no human mind has conceived – the things God has prepared for those who love Him.”

APPENDIX

- What all should know about the Rapture (pages 102-103)
- How to become a follower of Christ (pages 104-108)
- What should I expect as a follower of Christ (page 109)
- Suggestions for next steps (pages 110-111)
- A glossary of biblical terms (pages 112-134)
- About the I AM A WATCHMAN ministry (page 135)
- Links to follow-up video teachings (page 136)

WHAT ALL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE RAPTURE

The Rapture is imminent

It is often difficult to believe in something that others question or deny. It is sometimes difficult to believe that a teaching which is prophetic in nature will have a literal (rather than figurative) fulfillment. Though the Rapture teaching may be difficult to believe, it is a core last-days prophecy deeply rooted in Scripture. It is true that many do not believe there will be a Rapture. It is also true that many will be left behind when the Rapture takes place. The prayer of those who established the IAmAWatchman.com and AmIRaptureReady.org websites is that none would be left behind. Noted below are a few reasons to believe there will be a Rapture:

- There will be a Rapture because Jesus spoke of it.
(Matt. 24:27, 37-41)
- There will be a Rapture because Jesus cautioned individuals to prepare for it (Matthew 24:42-44).
- There will be a Rapture because the Apostle Paul wrote of it (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; 5:9; 1 Corinthians 15:52).
- There will be a Rapture because it is referenced in the book of Revelation (Revelation 3:10-11; 4:1-2; 7:9-17).
- There will be a Rapture because it is allegorized in the book, Songs of Solomon, and is consistent with the nature and working of God through the ages (deliverance and rescue are always offered before divine judgment comes).
- The Rapture is imminent because Jesus said there would be signs that announce His return (Matthew 24:32-33). These signs have been fulfilled or are being fulfilled now. They include:
 - Israel must be restored as a nation (this happened in 1948

in accordance with prophecies found in Ezekiel 4 and 37).

- Israel would be restored as a nation in one day (Isaiah 66:8).
- The Hebrew language would return to the land, and the land would prosper (Isaiah 55:12-13).
- There would be a move to reestablish Jerusalem as the capital.
- Control of the city of Jerusalem would be a point of contention for the world (Zechariah 12:1-4).
- The Rapture will happen because it is prophesied to happen. Every one of the more than 900 prophecies to be fulfilled by this point in history, have been fulfilled, exactly as foretold. The remaining 100 or so prophesied events (including the Rapture) will unfold exactly as foretold.
- The Rapture event is imminent because all requisite prophecies related to the Rapture have been fulfilled, and the signs Jesus said would precede the Rapture are visible. Matthew 24:33b states: “...*When you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.*”

The Lord can come at any moment. And when Jesus returns, those who are spiritually ready (right with God) will be taken-up to be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and those who are left will have to endure the horrors of the upcoming Tribulation period. Billions (not millions) will die. Most of those who become believers in Christ in those last seven years (the Tribulation period) will be martyred for their faith. The church will be gone. Evil will be rampant. Society will disintegrate. Plagues and war will come. The Antichrist will rise to power—his policies will make Hitler seem like a gentleman. It will be a time such that the world has never known. You will not want to see it—I pray you will not have to. The good news is, if the Rapture has not happened yet, there is a way to guarantee you will escape the terror that is coming. The answer is to become a devoted follower of Jesus.

HOW DO I BECOME A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

The paragraphs that follow note what God has done to make it possible for humans to be forgiven and restored to a right relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

What God has done for us

The situation was grave when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. God loves humans and desires to be in perfect relationship with them—on earth and in heaven. However, humans are willful and quick to fall into sin and out of a perfect relationship with their Creator. The book of Genesis notes how the first humans were disobedient. In rejecting God's counsel they fell into sin and out of a state of perfection. The fate of humanity hung in the balance as God pondered His options. God determined He would not forsake His people. In Genesis 3:14-15, God declared He would send a Savior to make things right. This Savior, the Messiah, would redeem and restore a sinful humanity.

The Messiah was sent from heaven to earth to satisfy God's Law, which requires a perfect sacrifice to atone for sin. Jesus became that sacrifice; He lived a sinless life and became the ultimate perfect sacrifice. The Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ came to earth over 2000 years ago, was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, lived a humble life, healed many, taught the masses, and though He was guilty of no sin or wrongdoing, He was arrested, tried, convicted, and crucified. He took our punishment (Col. 1:22; 1 Peter 1:19).

The prophet Isaiah wrote that God placed our sins on Him (Isaiah 53). The debt that we owed to God, Jesus paid. He died on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and our souls made perfect. He died so we could live, in glory, with Him, in heaven, forever.

For many, this truth is a lot to process, and possibly difficult to believe. But all that Jesus did 2000 years ago was prophesied to happen centuries before He came to earth. The biblical record is true. What Scripture records about our sin, our need, God's love, and what the Messiah has done is true. What the Bible states about what Jesus is about to do is also true. What follows is information on how to enter into a relationship with Jesus, what to expect and do as a follower of Jesus, and suggested next steps for the new believers in Christ.

How to be forgiven, saved and receive eternal life

Maybe you've heard about Jesus, or grew up in a church, or had 'religious' family members. That's a fine start, but not a fine ending. More is required. Knowing a few spiritual terms, verses or Bible stories is not sufficient for salvation. One must know and do the following:

- **Believe:** Jesus taught, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16). The first step is to fully and unreservedly believe that Jesus is God's Son and the Savior of the world. Further, one must believe that Jesus came to earth some 2000 years ago, was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, lived a sinless life, fulfilled more than 100 prophecies, was crucified, died and was buried, rose again on the third day, and will return to both rescue His church and later, establish His Millennial Kingdom.
- **Acknowledge or proclaim Jesus as your Savior:** The Apostle

Paul notes a key next step in the process of growing close to God in the tenth chapter of the book of Romans: *“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”* (Romans 10:9). One must acknowledge, confess, and be proud of their faith in Christ. There is no such thing as a secret or undercover Christian.

Summary: The process receiving eternal life includes **1)** accepting Jesus as Lord (as God) **2)** believing that He was crucified, died and rose again and **3)** making a sincere commitment to live for Him, and if necessary, die for Him.

Are you ready to believe in Jesus?

You can be forgiven and saved right now. You do not need a Pastor or anyone to pray with or for you. You can do this. God wants you to do this. Your next steps are presented below. Some have described this process as the spiritual ABCs. The simple three-step process follows:

1. **ADMIT** you need God’s forgiveness. We are all sinners and have done wrong. Every person needs God’s forgiveness to be made right with God.
2. **BELIEVE** in Jesus as God’s Son, who rose from the dead. Only He is able to forgive you and provide eternallife.
3. **COMMIT** your life to Jesus. True faith in Jesus require a willingness to follow Jesus. Just as the early followers of Jesus changed their lives to follow Him each day, we are called to change wrongful ways and serve Him.

Remember, God's offer of eternal life is a gift. We do not earn it; we accept it: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

If you would like to commit to believe in and follow Jesus right now, you can do so by praying a prayer similar to the one noted below:

"God, I admit that I have done wrong and that I need you. Please forgive me. I believe in Jesus as Lord. I believe Jesus rose from the dead. I receive your gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. Help me live for you from this moment forward. Amen."

If you sincerely expressed this prayer, you can know God has forgiven you, and given you eternal life. The Bible says, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life"* (1 John 5:13).

Congratulations on your new life in Christ!

Suggested Readings:

- Luke and John: these books profile the ministry of Jesus.
- Acts: this book profiles the birth of the New Testament Church and the 30 or so years following the resurrection.
- James, Philippians, Galatians, Ephesians: these books profile how believers should live-out their faith.
- Psalms: this book provides comfort, encouragement, and guidance.
- Romans, Hebrews: these doctrinally deep books profile how the Old Testament practices and Covenants were fulfilled and given new meaning in Christ. That is, the major truths presented in the Old Testament point to Christ.
- Proverbs: this book imparts wisdom and insight.
- Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy: these books provide information on God's relationship to humanity from the beginning to the exodus

from Egypt in the days of Moses (Cir. 1450 BC).

- Joshua, Judges: these books provide information on 400 or so years following Moses.
- I/II Samuel: I/II Kings, I/II Chronicles: these books provide information on God's moving from approximately 900-550 BC.
- Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther: these books provide information on God's moving from approximately 575-450 BC.
- Key prophetic books profiling last days events: Daniel, Zechariah, Joel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Revelation.
- Key prophetic Chapters in the New Testament: Matthew 24-25; Luke 14, 21; I Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2; I Corinthians 15; 2 Timothy 3.

Verses on the subject of salvation are presented below:

- *"For all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God..."* (Romans 3:23)
- *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, 'Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.'" (Romans 10:9-11)*
- *"Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."* (Heb. 9:27-28)
- *"Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life."*
(John 6:47)
- *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8)
- *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the...Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."* (Titus 3:5-7)

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?

Believers are not exempt from trial or trouble—but believers *are* promised a “Helper” (John 14:26), an Advocate (1 John 2:1), and that God will never “leave nor forsake” them (Hebrews 13:5). Believers are also promised forgiveness, mercy, grace, God’s love, and the hope of eternal life in heaven. Whatever difficulties we face, or sacrifices we make on earth, will pale when compared to the glorious riches that await the faithful in heaven. However, and this is a big however, being a believer at this point in history (the last days) means that your life on earth will become more difficult—not more comfortable. Scripture notes that believers living in the last days should **expect** the following:

- **Oppression:** Evil is on the rise. It will become increasingly difficult to be a witness for the Lord without consequence. Expect your work and relationships to be impacted.
- **Satan will try to discourage and destroy you:** He hates all that God loves, blesses, and uses for His glory. Stay prayerful. Study His Word and focus on the positive. Dwell on the promises of God rather than the difficulty or pain of the moment. Do not let your guard down (1 Peter 5:8; 1 Corinthians 10:12).
- **God will test you:** Testing may appear to be negative, but by it, believers are made better, wiser, and stronger. James 1:2-4 notes: *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may...not lack anything.”*

Read the book of Exodus for a case study in how God tests His people (and the importance of being ready to pass the test).

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

What are the best next steps? Noted below are a few suggestions:

- **Join a good, evangelical, Bible-teaching church:** When looking for a church, do not be unduly influenced by congregation size, building, professional music or preaching presentations. Look for heart. Look to see if people love each other. Discern whether or not the staff are good teachers and shepherds. Ask for information about church goals, study opportunities, beliefs, and missions involvement. Determine if staff teach and preach in a way that communicates the need to be prepared for the imminent return of the Lord.
- **Join a study group:** Meeting with a small group of fellow believers provides an opportunity to build relationships, share, learn, pray with and for others, and walk with others on your spiritual journey.
- **Develop your personal prayer life:** Many are busy and hesitate to schedule something new—particularly a new time commitment every day. However, prayer is not only important; it is essential. Jesus prayed constantly and encouraged his disciples to pray. Paul noted that believers are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). A few suggestions to help you develop a meaningful daily prayer are listed below.
 - **Schedule it:** For many, if it’s not on the schedule, it doesn’t get done. Set a time each day to have a conversation with God. *Try to develop a Pray-Through-The-Day mindset.*
 - **Seek out a prayer partner:** This needs to be a confidant who will pray for you and with you—someone who will encourage and challenge you.

- **Keep a prayer journal:** Track your prayers. Follow-up with your prayer partner to let them know you have not forgotten their prayer requests.
- **Be specific:** Note when you begin praying for specific needs and how God moves. Review your prayer journal often and rejoice in seeing how God moves to answer specific requests.
- **Plan to give:** Christian stewardship is the mark of Christian maturity. When believers give, believers receive. Give cheerfully, regularly, and generously. Give of your time, talent, resources, and finances. “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).
- **Read and study the Word:** Acts 17:11 notes that the Bereans (a small group of believers living in Berea) were commended for their diligence in studying the Word. It honors God when His people strive to learn what His Word says, how to share it, and how to live it out.
- **Prayerfully consider if God is calling you not just to be a believer, but also to be a Watchman:** The English term Watchman is found more than a dozen times in Scripture, perhaps most notably in Ezekiel 33:1-9. In that passage of Scripture, we see that a Watchman is a bold and faithful believer who exercises a concern beyond self. A Watchman will know the Word, be attuned to the Lord’s working and expectations, and find ways to inform and warn others about what God has done, what He expects, and what He has promised to do. Being a Watchman is biblical, God-honoring work. The work of a Watchman is challenging, but I believe that when one lives to honor God, God will honor them. P

A GLOSSARY OF BIBLICAL TERMS

This resource is provided to explain and define many commonly used and frequently referenced terms or expressions relating to Eschatology – the biblical study of End Times, Final Days, or the Last Days.

The terms and phrases define many historical and current prophetic views held by various mainline denominations and independent churches. Other views are discussed and defined. However, I Am A Watchman Ministries offers the content from the perspective of our position on the particular subjects. The positions we hold will be reflected in the articles and content you read on this Rapture Kit USB resource.

We understand that churches, evangelists and TV personalities espouse views which in some instances agree, and in others vary from I Am A Watchman. The glossary is not intended to disparage their views or dispute their books or sites. Where there is disagreement, we hold to the simple principle – “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” (Col. 3:14)

We believe in the visible, literal Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church. We believe the Rapture is followed by a literal seven-year Tribulation. We hold that the Antichrist is a literal physical human being. We believe in the Post-Tribulation Second Coming of Christ to rule and reign for the 1000-Year Millennial Kingdom on planet Earth. We believe that a literal eternal Hell and Heaven exist— one the final destination of those who oppose God or refuse His offer of salvation; the other the final eternal place of celebration in God’s Presence reserved for those who accept God’s gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

TERMS AND SUBJECTS APPEAR IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Abomination of Desolation: At the midpoint of the 7-year tribulation, the Antichrist and False Prophet will set up a statue or image (likely representing the Antichrist) in the new Temple and command all people to worship it. Worship of (and swearing allegiance to) the Antichrist is also linked to taking the Mark of the Beast. This idol, the “Abomination of Desolation,” is referenced by both Daniel (Dan. 9:27) and Jesus (Matt. 24:15). A foreshadowing of this event appears in Daniel 11:29-39, and was fulfilled in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded Jerusalem, desecrated the Temple with pigs blood, set up a statue of Zeus and commanded all to worship it, and forbade daily sacrifices in the temple for about three years.

Abraham’s Bosom: this term is used only once in the New Testament (Luke 16). In that passage, it appears to be a reference to the place where Old Testament saints are currently located, while they await the Rapture. After the return of Christ, they will be brought from that place up into Heaven to be with the Lord. Paul writes, “...then the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air...” (1 Thess. 4:17)

Abomination of Desecration: this is a literal physical event. Antichrist will enter the newly constructed Third Temple in Jerusalem (see Temple details below), sit on the throne in the Holy of Holies and declare himself to be God. He will do this with the help of the False Prophet (see definition below). Once he officially crosses that line of acting supernatural to declaring to the world that he IS supernatural, his fate is sealed. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 makes it very clear the Antichrist is not just claiming to be ‘a’ god. No, the Antichrist makes it very clear he is claiming to be THE God.

Agnostic: Someone who believes the existence of a greater power (such as a god), cannot be either proven or disproved; therefore, they neither believe or disbelieve in the Christian God or any other deity. It may sound similar to Atheism, but it is not the same. An Atheist denies that God exists. An Agnostic believes we cannot know – no denial necessary.

Age of Grace: Also known as the Church Age, and sometimes called the Parenthetical Period. The Age of Grace began when Jesus was rejected and crucified and continues through our time. During this period, Jews and Gentiles who receive Christ become part of the Body, the Bride, the Church. This age will continue until the Church is removed at the Rapture. [See Church Age]

Amillennialism: The belief that there will be no literal 1000-year reign of Christ. Thus Revelation 20 is taken symbolically, not literally, by adherents of this view. Amillennialists believe that Israel has been permanently set aside for all time and that God's current plan of salvation involves only the Church.

Antichrist: The Antichrist is an End Times fake messiah who desires to control all major global systems and destroy all who love God and Jesus Christ. He has other names: Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:1-12), the boastful king (Daniel 7), leader who brokers a 7-year peace deal with Israel the breaks it (Dan. 9), rider on white horse (Rev 6:2), the first beast rising up from the sea, waging war against the saints and speaking proud blasphemes, receiving his powers directly from the "dragon" Satan (Rev. 13:1-7). Many will bow to the Antichrist believing he is god because of his 'powers' (2 Thess. 2:9-11). Jesus tells us some are merely deceived (Matt. 24:5). Others will be forced into submission or killed. Revelation 19:20; 20:10) detail the Antichrist's end -

he and the false prophet burn for eternity in the lake of fire! The antichrist is associated with the number 666 which is called the “mark of the beast” (13: Revelation 16-18) [See Mark of the Beast.].

Apostasy (the): The Bible predicts a rejection of truth or a complete departure from the traditional faith. In history, this loss of faith has challenged parts of the world. The Greek word [ἀποστασία, ας, ῆ] is translated “apostasy.” It typically describes a revolt or military coup (2 Thessalonians 2:3; Matthew 24:11-13).

Armageddon: Armageddon is derived from two Hebrew words meaning “the Mount of Megiddo.” This mount or hill was an ancient strategic site for staging troops. The site is located in northern Israel, across the Plain of Esdraelon from Nazareth. Armageddon will be the site of the final battle between God and the armies of the Antichrist (Rev. 16:16).

Atheist: A person who lacks belief in god. An atheist can have a negative or positive designation. Negative atheists, while they don’t believe in a god, do not positively assert no gods exist. Positive atheists, however, typically hold that no form of deity exists and therefore they (positively) do not believe in God.

Bottomless Pit: In the Greek this term is rendered “pit of the abyss.” It appears nine times in the New Testament. Every time it appears it references a place to restrain certain beings who are being held under the judgment of God (Luke 8:31). In Revelation 20 we are told it will be the holding place of Satan during the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-3).

Book of Life: At the final (Great White Throne) Judgment, a book is opened. In it appear the names of every person who responded to God’s call of salvation (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 20:12, 21:27).

Sadly, many names will not be found there (Matt. 7:22), and no protest can change what is written, or not written in the Book of Life. Those whose names do not appear will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Ex. 32:32; Psalm 69:28; Revelation 20:15).

Book of Remembrance: This is the second book opened at the final (Great White Throne) Judgment. In it, God has recorded the deeds of people on earth (Malachi 3:16). These records will not determine eternal destiny (Heaven vs. Hell), it will determine eternal rewards. The deeds recorded there will be a source of comfort, but also embarrassment and shame (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12). The wise are mindful that God sees and knows every word, deed, and motive (2 Chronicles 16:9; Hebrews 4:13).

Bride of Christ: The Church, which means the collective body of born-again Christians, is represented as a chaste virgin bride (2 Cor. 11:2). Christ, the Bridegroom expects His bride to live in holiness and purity. This relationship is depicted several places in Scripture, including Song of Solomon. The wedding will occur in Heaven, but the reception (Marriage Supper of the Lamb) will be held on earth. When Christ returns at the end of the 7 year Tribulation.

Church Age: The period of the New Testament Church, often called the Church Age, began on the day of Pentecost and ends with the Rapture. Many believe the Church Age is the reason there is a gap between the 69th and 70th week in Daniel's prophecy.

(Daniel 9:24-27)

Damascus: The city, currently part of Syria, has existed for several thousand years. It has the unique distinction of never having been destroyed in battle. However, Isaiah prophesied "...Damascus will no longer be a city, but a heap of ruins" - Isaiah 17:1 (NIV).

Day of the Lord: This phrase is a general designation of the periods of time in which God works in an especially profound way. Hence, the 7-year Tribulation can be referred to as the Day of the Lord, though more often in Scripture, the second half of the Tribulation, also called the ‘Great Tribulation,’ is referred to as the Day of the Lord. The day of the Rapture can also be referred to as the Day of the Lord. More than the designation of how many hours or minutes, the phrase references God’s sovereign plan, timing and working.

Dispensationalism: The view that God’s dealings with His creation have proceeded through well-defined time periods. They believe God has acted out of predetermined and assigned purposes which differ from period to period. Man’s response to God in each of these dispensations has ushered in the next.

The Dragon: This is one of the most accurate albeit symbolic names for the devil. Think of the depiction of Satan in the Garden of Eden. In Revelation 12:9) Satan is again described as, “that old serpent.” Dragon is a variation.

Eastern Gate: The Eastern Gate plays a pivotal role in Last Days prophecy. Currently, the Eastern Gate is the only one that is barricaded shut, completely blocked. Ezekiel prophesied it would remain closed and only be opened by “the Prince” referring to Jesus (Ezekiel 44:1-3).

Eschatology: Eschatology is an academic theological term which simply means, the study of the final events in earthly human history. The study includes but is not limited to events, prophecies, and predictions related to ‘End Times,’ or ‘Last Days.’

Eternity: The everlasting state which has no beginning and no end. God has existed in eternity, eternally; having no beginning and no end (Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 90:2).

False Church: During the Tribulation period, the Antichrist and false Prophet will prohibit the worship of Jesus and establish a new, global “faith” or church. The focus of this false faith (or church) is to honor the Antichrist.

False Prophet: The False Prophet appears several places in Revelation. His primary function is to convince the world that the Antichrist is, in fact, the real Christ. He may also be the administrator of the one world church or False Church. The world will worship the Antichrist because of this evil prophet’s work. The False Prophet seems to have some Satan-infused “powers” of his own which lend credibility to his message and causes people to follow the Antichrist. He is present later when the Antichrist seems to come back to life after what appeared to be a fatal wound, possibly the result of an assassination attempt. (Revelation 13:11-14)

Gehenna: Hebrew: Ge Hinnom, (literally, “Valley of Hinnom”). The Valley of Hinnom is the modern name for the valley surrounding Jerusalem’s Old City. In Old Testament times it was Jerusalem’s garbage dump; kept perpetually on fire. Several evil Kings of Judah commanded the people to worship a false god – Baal. Worshipers of Baal would cast their children, screaming and alive, into the flames of Ge Hinnom as an offering to appease the false god (Jeremiah 19:2- 6). Because of its evil history, writers of the Old Testament used it to describe a place where evil belonged. Gehenna is also a place where there are degrees of punishment, meaning there could be more punishment or horror based upon ones evil deeds and the number of times they rejected Christ (Rom. 2:5; Matt. 11:23, 23:14) [see also Hell, Hades, Lake of Fire].

Gog: Ezekiel describes Gog as being “...from the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2-3). In Ezekiel’s prophecy, Gog will lead an army of several nations who attack Israel.

Gog and Magog: There are two Gog Magogs (Ezek.. 38-39; Rev. 20:7-8), and two distinct wars. Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 is the namesake of the wicked Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38-39. Revelation 20 uses the name as a comparison. The first battle doesn’t mention Satan, whereas in Revelation 20 he’s the central figure. Christians in the present Church Age will likely not experience Act I as the Rapture probably precedes this war. Christians will be present for Act II, as part of the conquering army at Jesus’ side when the Antichrist is defeated at the Battle of Armageddon and condemned to Hell.

Gog and Magog [Act One]: This war is profiled in Ezekiel 38-39. Most commentators believe a large coalition of forces hostile to Israel (led by Russia) will attack Israel with overwhelming firepower. God will intervene and destroy enemy forces. Many believe this war will take place just before or shortly after the Rapture, and close to the beginning of the 7 year Tribulation.

Gog and Magog [Act Two]: At the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ, the Antichrist will be released for a short time. He will rally the willful and disobedient, form a massive army and attack the Kingdom which Christ has established and ruled for 1000 years. Evil forces will be defeated and forever banished to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 21). In the last battle, Gog, the ruler or leader, is the Antichrist. His followers are corporately referred to as Magog.

Great White Throne: This judgment is a sad and devastating time at the end of the Millennium where the unsaved face the consequences of their irreversible choice to reject, ignore, or deny Christ. Every unsaved person who ever lived will stand before God to receive their judgment. The Bible says, “They will be judged according to their works,” but this should not be interpreted to mean the things they did determined their fate—or if they’d only done more good things they would not be sentenced to eternity in hell (Revelation 20:11-15). No, the focus of this judgment is what individuals did not do—accept Christ as their Saviour.

Heaven: The eternal home of the God. Heaven is the eternal destination of those who trust in Christ as their Savior. Paradise and Heaven are used interchangeably in Scripture. Jesus referred to Paradise as He was dying on the cross, telling one of the two men by His side, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus knew He would die and be taken to Heaven. Heaven and Paradise are equivalent. The description of paradise (Rev. 2:7; 2 Cor. 12:3-4) further clarifies the synonym.

Hades: Is a term comparable to Sheol. Hades, however, is a reference reserved almost exclusively to describe the place of the wicked dead. Regarding Eschatology, it would be the place where the evil dead – those who died without Christ – currently reside and await their eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire or Hell (Revelation 20:14). In that final judgment, Revelation 19:20) describes death (Hades/Sheol), Hell, and all their inhabitants being cast into the Lake of Fire [see also Hell, Tartarus, Gehenna]

Hell: Hell is the place of eternal damnation (punishment). When Jesus made reference to Hell, He was referring to a place of punishment. In Luke 16:23-26, Jesus noted that a man in Hell was in torment, flames, and pain. The word “Hell” as used in the Bible, has been interpreted from numerous terms in the original Hebrew or Greek. Gehenna and Sheol are used in the Old Testament, whereas the New Testament introduces the concept of a Lake of Fire. The Biblical understanding of Hell is based on the Hebrew and Greek historical references which can be translated differently based on the context. The two primary terms in English are Hell or Hades [see also Hades, Tartarus, Gehenna, Lake of Fire].

Historicism: Historicism is a view espoused primarily by Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, and the Jehovah Witnesses. Historicism is the theory that all current church ages should be interpreted using a days = years formula. For example, Historicism would teach that the 2300 days of Daniel 8 and 1290 days of Daniel 12 are not days, but years. They also teach that the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments in Revelation chapters 7-16 are historical events over the past 2000 years. This erroneous theory has led to multiple predictions of Christ’s return, none of which came to pass.

Israel: God’s chosen people – the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2) that of his seed God would build a great nation. Israel is the term used for both the nation and the Jews who live there [see Nation of Israel, 12 Tribes of Israel].

Jacob’s Trouble: This period is referred to by Jeremiah as “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” Daniel calls it “the time of distress such as never before occurred” (Daniel 12:1). Jesus quotes this prophecy in Matthew

24:21, where He answers the disciples' question about His return. The time of Jacob's trouble will take place during the last 3-1/2 years of the 7-year Tribulation. Under the oppressive hand of the Antichrist, this will be a time of great suffering on earth. The actions of the Antichrist and the sins of a willful humanity will prompt God's wrath to be poured out on a sinful world (Jeremiah 30:7) in the hope this will prompt people to turn to Christ.

Judgment Seat of Christ: Also sometimes referred to as the BEMA seat. The Apostle Paul used the Greek word, "Bema" in 2 Corinthians 5:10 translated, "judgment seat." Historically and biblically, BEMA refers to a platform where winners of athletic events are awarded their crowns or medals— picture our modern Olympic Games. Paul made numerous sports references in his writings so it is not surprising he would choose this term. The BEMA seat of Christ is not a judgment which determines someone's eternal salvation; this judgment is where our devotion to Christ is rewarded (1 Cor. 3:9-15). Later, these crowns are given back to Christ in worship (Revelation 4:10).

Kings of the East: In Revelation 16:12, we see the 6th angel pouring out a vial into the Euphrates River; which immediately dries up! This miracle makes it possible for the Kings of the East to march into Israel. Although the Kings of the East are commonly interpreted to be the nation of China, the use of 'Kings' plural, could mean it also includes many nations located east of Israel.

Lake of Fire: The specific phrase "Lake of Fire" is only found in Revelation (19:20, 20:10, 14-15) where it describes the final abode of the Devil, the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and all their co-workers, both demonic and human. It is the ultimate and final Hell. In Matthew

25:41, Hell is described as a place of burning sulfur. All condemned to this inferno suffer unabated eternal torment. Those who have over history rejected Christ are currently ‘suspended’ in Hades or Sheol – the temporary abode of the unsaved dead. At the final Judgment, death and Hell (and all their inhabitants) will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20) with its unspeakable agony and unrelenting torment (Luke 16:24; Mark 9:45-46). Those cast into the Lake of Fire will be forever separated from God. Without God, there is no love, forgiveness, joy, kindness, relief, hope, or pleasure of any kind [see Hades, Hell, Gehenna, Sheol].

Little Horn: In a vision, Daniel described a little horn which rose up from among ten other horns. The little horn is most likely another representation of the Antichrist. The Apostle John describes the Antichrist with almost the same terminology (Rev. 13; Daniel 7:7-8, 19-25).

Magog: Magog is one of the grandsons of Noah (Gen. 10:2). Magog’s descendants settled in what is now Europe and parts of Asia. Ezekiel refers to the people of Magog as skilled warriors (Ezekiel 38:15, 39:3-9). The descendants of Magog will take part in a large coalition force and attack Israel (Ezek. 38-39). God will thwart their efforts and intervene to grant Israel the victory.

Maranatha: An End Times term used as a watch word. First century believers used the term to express the thought “Our Lord cometh” (see 1 Cor. 16:22). The same thought is expressed in Revelation 22:20 where John writes, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

Mark of the Beast: [see also Number of the Beast, 666] Each person alive during the reign of Antichrist will be required to be marked. The mark is related to commerce, possibly replacing all currency and credit.

The mark will be displayed on each person's right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:16-18). No transaction will be possible except with the mark: income, food, movement, and personal safety will all be subject to it. Accepting the mark will not be optional, refusal is punishable by death! The spiritual penalty for receiving the mark is also death – in Hell (Revelation 14:11). Revelation 13:18 says, "This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666." Many have tried to say definitively what the number 666 means. However, no one will know for certain until the Beast arrives [see also Number of the Beast].

Mid-Tribulationist: A Mid-tribulation position holds that a Rapture which will occur at the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation. A Mid-trib position accepts that God will force Christians to endure the events and persecution of the first 3½ years of Tribulation, then rescue them from the destruction of the second half. This Eschatological belief is in comparison to Pre-trib – before the Tribulation begins, and Post-trib – after the Tribulation ends.

Millennium: After the Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to Earth with His saints – all the people who have ever given their lives to Christ. Jesus will defeat the armies of the Antichrist, then set up an earthly Kingdom where He will rule in peace and righteousness for one thousand years (Rev. 20:3-4; Isaiah 9:4-7).

Nation of Israel: According to the Office of Historian, US State Department, Israel was established as a nation on May 14th, 1948, when David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. President Harry S. Truman officially recognized the new nation the same day. The borders of the country have

been disputed ever since that day. (State of Israel used interchangeably with 'Country'). The Israel Science and Technology Directory notes that Israel is the only nation on earth that inhabits the same land, bears the same name, speaks the same language, and worships the same God that it did 3,000 years ago. The inhabitants of Israel and descendants of the 12 tribes are commonly referred to as Jews. In End Times studies, Israel is the central focus of prophecy. Hebrews or Jews have been, and always will be God's chosen people.

New Heaven and New Earth: A picture of the New Heavens and New Earth is recorded in Revelation 21-22. The reference is to a re-created place which will be the eternal home many simply refer to as "Heaven."

Number of the Beast 666: When the Antichrist sets up his one-world governmental system, he will have economic, military, and statutory control of every country. His goal is that all humans be identifiable by a number (Rev. 13:16-18). Much speculation and mystery surround the number 666. But this is clear: receiving the 'mark' is an acknowledgment that the Antichrist is divine, and an irrevocable decision to reject God.

Pentecost: In Judaism, this holy day, 50 days after Passover, celebrates the harvest of first fruits and Moses receiving the Law of God – the Torah – at Mount Sinai. Christians remember Pentecost as the day the Holy Spirit birthed the New Testament Church and confirmed this blessing by filling the Apostles with the power to speak in tongues, perform miracles, and preach the Gospel to the world.

Pre-Tribulation: Sometimes referred to as Pre-trib or Pre-tribulationists. This position holds that the Rapture will occur before the seven-year Tribulation begins. This theological position on Eschatology is in comparison to Mid-trib, and Post-trib which teach the Rapture at the middle or end of the Tribulation respectively. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18 describes Christ' return as a "meeting in the air." All believers will be caught up to meet the Lord: first, Christians who have died throughout history will be called out from where their spiritual being has resided since death. Their mortal bodies will be resurrected, perfected and caught up to meet Jesus. Christians who are still alive will follow these resurrected saints to meet the Lord. This takes place "...in a flash, the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52).

Post-Tribulationist: This position anticipates the Rapture at the end of the seven-year Tribulation, meaning Christians will be required to suffer through the plagues, wars and natural disasters of Revelation. Post-Tribulationists believe the terms 'Rapture' and 'Second Coming' are the same event and can be used interchangeably.

Preterism: This is the belief that nearly all prophetic events have already happened. Many Preterists believe the destruction of the second Temple in the year 70 AD fulfilled the prophecies the book of Revelation.

Rapture: The Rapture is when the Lord Jesus descends from Heaven to rescue believers. While remaining in the air, He will "catch-up" His Bride, the Church. This exit of the Church makes way for the rise of Antichrist fulfilling Daniel's final 70th week (Matthew 25:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

Red Heifer: Some believe the Temple Mount must be “cleansed” before the Third Temple can be built. For this process, the Jews will need the ashes of a pure red heifer. That speculation comes from regulations in Numbers 19 and the fact that King Solomon cleansed the first Temple with the ashes of a specially prepared red heifer (Numbers 19:2-9).

Replacementism: Replacement Theology holds that Israel, having failed God, was replaced by the New Testament Church (around the year 70 AD, when the Temple was destroyed), and they believe the Church is “Spiritual Israel” or “Spiritual Jerusalem.” This position claims that all the promises and blessings, in fact, Israel’s entire inheritance, now belongs to the Church.

Restrainer: The Holy Spirit resides in all born-again believers. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 teaches us that the presence of the Holy Spirit on Earth restrains the forces of evil. When the Church leaves at the Rapture, the restraining power of the Holy Spirit, as it is known today, will also depart (Matthew 5:13).

Rosh Hashanah: Rosh Hashanah (also known as the Feast of Trumpets), is celebrated on the first and second days of Tishri (September). On these days, Jews celebrate the Jewish civil New Year (not the calendar New Year). Specially designed shofar trumpets are blown beckoning God’s people to repent. Some Christians expect the Rapture to be associated with Rosh Hashanah (Numbers 10:1-10).

Second Coming: This is the event when Christ will return, vanquish the Antichrist, and set up his 1000-year earthly reign. It’s important to understand the Second Coming is not the same as the Rapture. The Rapture takes place 7 years before the Second Coming (making it

technically the Third Coming). There is another significant difference between the two – the Rapture could occur at any moment. We know the Second Coming arrives 42 months (7 years) after the Antichrist defiles the Temple declaring he is God (Revelation 13:5; Matthew 25:13).

Sheep and Goat Judgment: Following Christ's victory at Armageddon, the Lord Jesus begins judging nations (Matthew 25:31-46). The rebels—goats nations—are 'purged' and enter into judgment and punishment. Those who have become believers in Christ are characterized as sheep, and will go into the millennial reign of Christ (Revelation 7:14; Acts 2:21). Those who rejected Christ are lost, and excluded from the millennium and heaven.

Shekinah: The visible majesty of God's Presence. Shekinah is pictured throughout Scripture in various forms: It surrounds Mount Sinai where Moses received the ten commandments. It hovered over the yet unformed Earth in Creation. It followed the nation of Israel through the desert as a cloud by day, and fire at night. It was often seen as a brilliant light or shimmering shadow around the Holy of Holies in the Temple. It rested between the cherubim in the Tabernacle, in Solomon Temple, and over the Ark of the Covenant. Shekinah is a biblical term initially used by Jews, but Christians now use it to describe the tangible but invisible presence of God.

Sheol: Is an Old Testament term for hell – sometimes translated 'grave' (based on the context of the particular verse, story, or regular use of the individual writers). When it is translated as Hell, it means the Jewish understanding of a place of eternal punishment [see also Hell, Abraham's Bosom].

Tabernacle to Temple: During the desert wandering in the days of Moses, the Jews transported a portable Tabernacle, a giant open-air courtyard of deconstructible curtain walls, and chambers. The innermost was called the Holy of Holies – which is where the visible glory of God dwelt. It was only entered by the High Priest, and only on certain occasions. Eventually, the Jews conquered Canaan and Jerusalem became their permanent dwelling. No longer a nomadic people, King David ordered a permanent Temple be built on Mt. Moriah, the location of the threshing floor he purchased from Araunah (2 Sam 24:24) and the site where Abraham was called by God to sacrifice his son, but was provided a substitute (ram) sacrifice at the last moment.

Temples – First Temple: Solomon's Temple bears his name because he commissioned and oversaw its construction to the exact details given to him by his father, King David. The Temple was completed around 987 B.C. Its opulence was Israel's love and devotion to Jehovah on display! The temple was known across the entire region. Rulers of other countries came to see its grandeur. 1 Kings 6:1-38 records the Temple construction project took 185,000 men seven years to build! It is impossible to calculate the value of the precious metals, finest cedar, gemstones, and food for 185,000 men for seven years. However, some have estimated the cost to rebuild Solomon's Temple today would exceed \$1.3 Trillion dollars. Roughly 400 years later in 587-586 BC, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple (2 Kings 25:8).

Second Temple: In 539 BC, King Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon. He permitted exiled Judeans to return to their land and rebuild the Temple (see Ezra 1). The Temple was completed under the reign of Darius and is chronicled in the book of Nehemiah.

About 20 years before the birth of Christ, Herod, the Roman-appointed head of Judea, began to make substantial modifications expanding the size of the Temple. In 70 AD, the Roman general, Titus, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24, destroyed the entire Temple complex. First Century historian Flavius Josephus witnessed the destruction firsthand. He recorded that the Temple was so completely obliterated, and the area so leveled, that had he not been present and personally witnessed its destruction, he would not have believed it was ever there.

Third Temple: The Third Jewish Temple will be completed before the second half of the Tribulation because that third Temple is where the Antichrist will sit when he declares himself to be God (Amos 9:11; 2 Thess. 2:3). There is much debate among Bible scholars about where Jews will construct the Temple. Many believe it will be on the Temple Mount in modern-day Jerusalem. However, recent archaeological projects indicate the second Temple was more likely located about 600-1000 feet south of the Mount.

Tribulation: The seven years following signing of the Peace Covenant between Israel and her enemies (brokered by the man who will become the Antichrist) will comprise the Tribulation. It can be divided into two halves. The first 3-1/2 years will begin with a time of false peace. In time, a False Prophet, and a false Christ will rise and assume absolute power. The second 3-1/2 years will be the complete opposite – the greatest suffering in human history. God's wrath is poured out on the Antichrist and his compatriots who are defeated at Armageddon (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:21).

Two Witnesses: During the Tribulation, two men will prophesy in the streets of Jerusalem. These two witnesses will have the power to call fire down from Heaven, to prevent it from raining, to turn bodies of water into blood, and to command numerous plagues (Revelation 11:5). They preach for 42 months. This enrages the Antichrist who will have them killed, and their bodies will lie in the street for three and a half days. Then they will be resurrected and ascend to Heaven.

Wormwood: A meteor named Wormwood will impact earth and poison one-third of the world's water supply. God created the stars (Job 9:9) and knows the whereabouts of each of them. The star named Wormwood is no different. God will use it at His pleasure (Jer. 9:15).

Wrath of God: During the Great Tribulation (a designation for the last half of the 7-year Tribulation period), the Wrath of God is released on all humanity in terrifying judgments. Not only the people, but the very planet will endure these hardships, diseases, and plagues. God's wrath is released because the world refuses to abandon its wicked ways (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rev. 14:9-11).

10 Toes Horns and Kings: Daniel and John prophesy about the leaders (Kings) of various parts of what was once the Roman Empire. They are referred to as different parts of a beast, with ten toes, and ten horns. These ten leaders could lead ten countries or ten regions of the world. It appears they will surrender their authority and territory to the Antichrist (Daniel 2:41-44, 7:20; Revelation 17:12, 17).

12 Tribes of Israel: The twelve tribes of Israel bear the names of the twelve sons of Israel – the name God gave Jacob. Those twelve sons and tribes are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Isaac, Zebulun, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin (Exodus 1:1-4). *Because of sin, occasionally Dan is replaced with Joseph's son, Manasseh (see Rev. 7:5-8).*

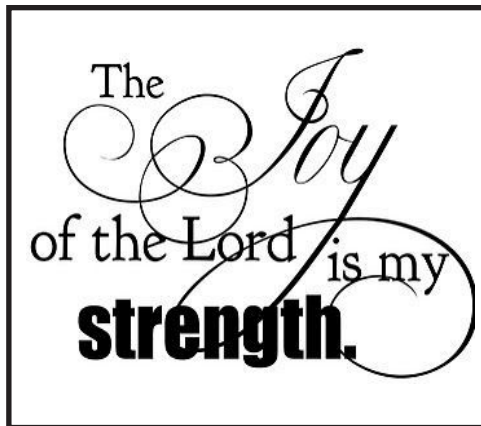
24 Elders: These 24 figures appear around God's throne in John's vision (see Rev. 4). This group is believed to represent the pivotal characters and groups in the New and Old Testaments. Later, John refers to the Holy City. In his description he notes that the names of the 12 tribes of Israel are posted on the gates, while the names of the 12 apostles are inscribed on the city's foundations. In Revelation 4:10, 11, the saints of all the ages are praising the Lamb for shedding His blood and casting their crowns before Him.

144,000 Jewish Saints: During the Tribulation, God will appoint ('seal') 144,000 Messianic Jewish evangelists, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. Some passages seem to indicate God will send an angel to in some way mark their foreheads, much like the Antichrist requires in false worship. Before the Antichrist enforces his mark, the 144,000 sealed Jews will be sent out to be witnesses to the unsaved during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:2-8).

200 Million Man Army: Some reference Revelation 9:14-16 to determine that during the second half of the Tribulation, under the command of the Antichrist, an evil army of 200 million soldiers will be amassed. This

army is loyal to the Antichrist, and will cross into the Middle East by crossing over the area which was the Euphrates river, but has dried up or been dammed up. Demons will lead this torturous army who will ultimately kill one-third of all humanity (Revelation 9:14-16, 16:12).

70th Week: Daniel 9:25-27 presents a two-part, 70-week prophecy noting two key future happenings. The first, the Triumphal Entry, happened 69 weeks (of years = 483 years) after a Persian King issued a particular proclamation regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. Daniel's last prophet week, the 70th week, is understood to mean a "week of years," or, 7 years, the 7 years leading up to the Millennial Rein of Christ – the Tribulation period.



ABOUT THE I AM A WATCHMAN MINISTRY

The I Am A Watchman ministry has been established to help individuals know the love of Jesus, enter into relationship with Jesus, live for Jesus, tell others about Jesus, and to prepare all for the imminent return of Jesus. In informal language, the I Am A Watchman ministry strives to help individuals finish well (which is to live a life of meaning and purpose, so at the coming judgment they will hear the Lord say, “Well done my good and faithful servant”).

In more theological terms, the I Am A Watchman ministry’s focus is to help prepare the bride of Christ to meet the coming Bridegroom. This language comes from Matt. 25:1-46, Rev. 19:7-9, Rev. 21:2, John 14:1-3, and Rev. 21:9-11. The phrase is a word picture that imagines believers in Christ as the bride, who stand in readiness and purity, waiting for the Groom, who has promised to return, reward, and take his bride away.

The wise will strive to live well so they can finish well. The astute are aware of what God has done and what prophecy notes He will do in the days to come. In support of these goals, the I Am A Watchman ministry is happy to make available at no cost a wealth of discipleship, prophecy, and spiritual growth resources for those who desire to learn.

LINKS TO FOLLOW-UP VIDEO TEACHINGS

What it means to be a watchman: This video teaching presents the biblical foundation for the term Watchman and the calling to be a Watchman. Drawing primarily from Ezekiel's 33, this teaching notes the particular heart, focus, and work of a watchman. The I Am A Watchman ministry team believes that at this a crucial time in history, God is calling both men and women to serve as spiritual watchmen. See Section 05 - Discipleship Study Materials and the What it Means to be a Watchman folder.

How to be saved / The gift of salvation: This teaching video profiles the need to be saved, what God through Christ has done to make salvation possible, and what individuals must do to receive God's precious gift. God's greatest desire is that His people know Him and enter into relationship with Him. See Section 05 - Discipleship Study Materials and The Gift of Salvation - How to be Saved folder.

A seven-part video teaching on Bible Prophecy: This is a comprehensive series that will help you learn about Bible Prophecy. See Section 05 - Discipleship Study Materials and the The Wonder of Bible Prophecy (7 Parts) folder.

A three-part teaching Apologetics: See Section 05 - Discipleship Study Materials and the Reasons to Believe (3 Parts) folder.

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Gary Ray is a writer, speaker, and Watchman for the Lord. He has served in pastoral ministry for 30 years and currently serves as President of the / ***Am A Watchman*** ministry.

He is a lifelong learner, knows and appreciates the grace of God, and enjoys speaking and writing about what God has done and what He is going to do.

This book will provide a general overview of the prophecies that are likely to unfold in the near future. As more than 900 Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled and verified to be true, and the accuracy rate of Bible prophecy is 100%, the wise will believe that the remaining 10% of Bible prophecies yet unfulfilled will unfold exactly as predicted.

God provides warnings and promises in Scripture. Both are sure and evidence His sovereignty and love. I pray the material in this book inspires and equips you to be a strong witness and Watchman for the King of kings and Lord of lords.

