

# End-times: Daniel's Seventieth Week

## Part 1: The Last Years of this Age

### Introduction

Here we examine one of the most fascinating prophecies in scripture:

*'Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make an atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place' (Dan 9.24).*

The word 'week' is translated from the Hebrew 'shabuwa', which means 'sevened' or 'units of seven'. It can mean a literal week, as in Lev 12.5 and Gen 29.27,28, or a symbolic week lasting seven years. It is generally accepted that Dan 9.24 refers to symbolic weeks since historical events fit this interpretation extremely well (see Table 1). Accordingly, it is widely accepted that Dan 9.24 refers to a period of 490 years.

### *Historicist<sup>1</sup> View*

Depending upon interpretation, Dan 9.24 could refer to milestone events that have already happened, or it can refer to both past and future events. Historicists see all 70 weeks as past and contiguous, with week 70 (seven years) commencing with the 3½ years of our LORD's ministry, and concluding with the stoning of Stephen. They believe the 'firm covenant' made in Dan 9.27 is the New Covenant:

*'And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week ...' (Dan 9.27)*

and that full 'atonement for iniquity' was achieved when Christ was crucified or 'cut off' in the midst of week 70 (Dan 9.26,27):

*'Then after sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing ... in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering ...' (Dan 9.26,27)*

Historicists believe that the cessation of the Jewish sacrificial system in Dan 9.27 was achieved when the temple veil was rent from top to bottom, and that the 'destroyer' of Dan 9.26,27 was Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD:

*'... and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary ... and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even a complete destruction ...' (Dan 9.26,27)*

There are several problems with the Historicist interpretation. First, it is difficult to see how the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the holy temple are compatible with the anointing or re-dedication (GNB) of the holy place in Dan 9.24. In what sense was the temple in Jerusalem anointed over the past 2,000 years for example? In what sense are Daniel's people (Israel) 'finished' in a transgression sense (v24) if week 70 has expired?

Secondly, is the 'prince' of v26 necessarily the same person as 'the one who makes desolate' in v27? There could be a significant time period between the two individuals. And if the firm covenant in Dan 9.27 was made by Christ, why don't Bible translators denote this by using the pronoun 'He' rather than 'he' in verse 27? Also, as we shall see, the Historicist view fails to blend Dan 9.24 with many other prophecies (particularly those concerning Israel) and with modern day observation.

Nevertheless, the Historicist view has been widely held by respected preachers such as Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Moody, and Spurgeon, and the Church of England accepted it in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is understandable when we recall that these years saw the height of Papal persecution, some 50 million believers being martyred for their faith. The TIME, TIMES AND HALF A TIME of Dan 7.25 is interpreted as

one TIME = 360 years

giving a total of 1260 years of Papal supremacy.

Approx. Date	Historical Event	Daniel's Weeks
458 BC or 445 BC	Decree to restore the walls and gates of Jerusalem	7 weeks = 49 years* (Dan 7.25)
408 BC	Rebuilding completed	
4 BC	Birth of Christ	
27BC	Start of Christ's ministry	62 weeks = 434 years* (Dan 7.25)
30-33 AD	The crucifixion, the Messiah 'cutoff' (Dan 9.26)	'after the 62 weeks' (an unknown period)
70 AD	'the prince' : Roman armies destroy Jerusalem	
? AD	Daniel's week 70	1 week = 7 years*
? AD	'anoint the most holy place' (Dan 9.24)	The Millennium

Table 1: Daniel's 70 Weeks (Futurist View)

\* Years based upon 12 lunar months

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<sup>1</sup> LORD is used throughout this article as the special or proper name for God, and is an expression of YHWH. Seventieth\_Week

### *Futurist View*

This view is illustrated in Table 1, with approximate historical dates. Daniel's timing is given as follows:

*'So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks ...' (Dan 9.25)*

Daniel's 7+62 weeks therefore span  $69 \times 7 = 483$  years. Bearing in mind that Daniel used the Hebrew calendar year of 12 lunar months or approximately 360 days, this period amounts to approximately 476 solar years. The exact start of the 70 weeks is unknown although there are two favourite dates. Many believe the decree of King Artaxerxes (Ezra 7.11-28) could be the beginning of Daniel's 7 weeks or 49 years (Dan 9.25). This decree was issued about 458BC, although it does not specifically refer to 'rebuilding'. If we take 458BC as the start of Daniel's 69 week period, then 476 solar years brings us to about 18 AD. But no significant Biblical event is recorded around this period. Others see the commissioning of Nehemiah in 445BC by the same king as the starting point of the prophecy (Ne 2.8-17). Starting from this date, 476 solar years brings us to about 32AD. Significantly, this date lies within the widely accepted bounds for the date of the crucifixion (30-33AD). In other words, starting from 445BC, Daniel's 69 weeks brings us very close to the crucifixion date or the 'cutting off' of the Messiah (Dan 9.26), as indicated in Table 1. Note that in this interpretation, the times of the Messiah in v25 and v26 are taken as synonymous, and not as two separate dates.

In contrast to the Historicist viewpoint, the Futurist view in Table 1 places an unknown time period between weeks 69 and 70, with week 70 still future. The interpretation of the first 69 weeks is therefore similar to the Historicist view e.g. Dan 9.26 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. However, futurists believe the crucifixion took place 'after the 62 weeks', i.e. after the 69<sup>th</sup> week, but not in the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The problem lies in the interpretation of Dan 9.27, since the subject of the verse is ambiguous. Grammatically, the pronoun 'he' in v27 should refer to the subject of the preceding sentence, and some take this to be the Messiah. If this true, translators should have used 'He' rather than 'he', as discussed. It is more likely that the subject of the sentence is 'the prince who is to come', v26. In particular, many take the 'he' of v27 to refer to a *future successor* to the prince of v26, and this is the view assumed here. This successor is taken to be the final Antichrist of history, who comes to the Jews in particular on a 'wing of abominations' (Mat 24.15).

The correct interpretation of Dan 9.27 must be one that is harmonious with the rest of scripture, and with modern day events. If week 70 has elapsed around the time of Christ there is no framework within which to fit many end-time prophecies, such as

Jer 30.4-7; Dan 7.23-28; Dan 11.21-45; Dan 12.11,12; Mat 24;

2 Thes 2.3,4 Rev 7.3-8; Rev 12.6; Rev 13

It seems Historicists generally have difficulty accommodating such texts, particularly those inferring a worldwide dictatorship and a cashless society (Rev 13), both of which seem imminent. For example, consider:

*'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, ... and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.'*  
(Dan 7.25)

This refers to severe persecution of 'the saints'. Whilst Historicists assume that the major persecution has already occurred under the Papacy, futurists take

one TIME = 1 year

and consider Dan 7.25 to refer to a future 3½ years of (probably Jewish) persecution under a final world dictator. As we shall see, this view is compatible with the modern-day scenario, such as worldwide computer control of people and the cashless society, both of which were veiled to Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and Wesley. This is not to say that all Historicist teaching is erroneous, rather, the truth probably lies in a blend of both viewpoints e.g. persecution under Papal power may once more emerge. As shown in Table 1, at the end of week 70 eternal justice is established under the reign of Christ during the millennium, and the holy temple is rededicated (anointed) to the Lord after being ravaged by Antichristian forces (Dan 11.31).

### *Understanding Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week*

From studies of prophecy in general, it is widely accepted that we are 'at the end of the age' and that the LORD's Second Coming is, relatively speaking, imminent. Daniel interprets this as 'the time of the end'. Thus, week 70 appears to be imminent and we need to understand the prophecies pertaining to this 7-year period. The important point here is that the words revealed to Daniel were 'sealed', *until the time of the end* (Dan 12.9). They were not to be understood *until* the end of the current age. Thus it seems timely to attempt to understand these prophecies. Of course, correct interpretation of scripture is impossible without reliance upon the Holy Spirit (John 14.26), but when looked at in the light of 21<sup>st</sup> century events, these prophecies can sometimes be clarified. This may be one way the Holy Spirit 'unlocks' the sealed scriptures, since there is a wealth of information that can be gathered from recent history and the current world scenario. For example, God has been gathering His people Israel out of the nations and placing them back into the land of Israel for about 100 years. And over the last 50 years, technology has created a very computer dependent and *controlled* society, especially in westernised nations. The following study therefore draws together OT and NT prophecies, together with 21<sup>st</sup> century hindsight, in order to help interpret Daniel's prophecy.

There are certain indisputable milestones in Week 70:

- ◆ World-wide dictatorship
- ◆ A 7-year covenant with Israel
- ◆ Severe persecution of 'the saints' (who could be gentiles and/or Jews)
- ◆ The 'mark of the beast'
- ◆ God's judgement of the nations (the 'wrath' of God)
- ◆ The Second Coming of Christ

Table 2 expands on this, where relevant historical and future events are assigned to six time epochs for clarity.

<b>Epoch</b>	<b>Key World Events</b>	<b>Key Bible References</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Babylonian, Persian, Greek Empires</b>	<b>Dan 7.4-6</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Roman Empire. Messiah ‘cut off’ shortly after the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week</b>	<b>Dan 7.7, Dan 9.26</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>The ‘age of grace’, or ‘church age’</b> <b>Destruction of the historic Roman Empire</b> <b>Return of Jews to Israel</b> <b>World-wide proclamation of the gospel</b> <b>The Apostasy</b> <b>Increased lawlessness</b> <b>Emergence of a ‘One World System’</b> <b>World wide persecution of the church</b> <b>Rebuilding of the Jewish temple</b> <b>Rapture of the church (Pretribulation view)</b>	<b>Mat 28.16-20</b>  <b>Ezek 37.11-14</b> <b>Mat 24.14</b> <b>2 Thes 2.3</b> <b>Mat 24.12</b> <b>Dan 7.23, Rev 13.7,16,17, 17.12</b> <b>Mat 24.9-13</b> <b>Ezek 40-44</b> <b>1 Thes 4.16-18, Rev 14.14-16</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>First half of 70<sup>th</sup> week</b> <b>Emergence of a world ruler, ‘the beast’</b> <b>Seven year covenant with Israel</b> <b>Mark of the beast ?</b> <b>End-time persecution of ‘the saints’</b> <b>Rapture of the church (Midtribulation view)</b>	<b>Rev 13.1,8</b> <b>Dan 9.27</b> <b>Rev 13.16,17</b> <b>Dan 7.21,25, Rev 13.7,10, 14.12</b> <b>1 Thes 4.16-18, Rev 14.14-16</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Last half of 70<sup>th</sup> week</b> <b>Breaking of the seven-year covenant</b> <b>Mark of the beast?</b> <b>Israel’s Great Tribulation (Jacob’s trouble)</b> <b>End-time persecution of ‘the saints’</b> <b>Removal of the ‘beast’s authority</b> <b>Destruction of world economic and religious system</b> <b>Rapture of the church (Postribulation view)</b> <b>Judgement of the earth – wrath of God</b> <b>Abomination of desolation, and Armageddon</b> <b>Second Coming of Christ</b> <b>Kingdom of Christ ushered in</b>	<b>Dan 9.27</b> <b>Rev 13.16,17</b> <b>Jer 30.7, Dan 12.1, Mat 24.15-24</b> <b>Dan 7.21,25, Rev 13.7,10, 14.12</b> <b>Dan 7.26</b> <b>Rev 17 and 18</b> <b>1 Thes 4.16-18, Rev 14.14-16</b> <b>Rev 16</b> <b>Dan 12.11, Mat 24.15, Rev 19.19</b> <b>1 Thes 4.16</b> <b>Dan 7.27</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Millennial reign of Christ</b>	<b>Zech 14.9, Rev 20.6</b>

Table 2 : Key Events Associated with Daniel’s 70 Weeks

We note from Table 2 that the church is removed from the earth (the so-called ‘rapture’) around the time of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, although there are differing views as to exactly when. This is reflected in the much discussed *Pretribulation*, *Midtribulation* and *Postribulation* viewpoints, where the rapture is placed at the start, midway, or end of week 70, respectively. To this end, it is helpful to understand what is meant by ‘the saints’, and ‘the holy people’ referred to in Daniel and Revelation, since it is such a people who suffer under the Antichrist. Indeed, is there a distinction between the two terms, and how do they relate?

### **Epoch A**

This time epoch spanned three world empires. It started with the Babylonian Empire, (modern day Iraq) which is characterised by a lion and an eagle (Dan 7.4). This reflects the royalty and sovereignty (see also Rev 4.7) of that empire. It was followed by the Persian Empire (modern day Iran) which is characterised by a bear (Dan 7.5). This reflects a brutal empire. The third empire was that of Greece (Dan 7.6). This empire is characterised by a leopard, which reflects the rapid military conquests of Alexander. The symbols here are important since they describe the characteristics of a future and final world empire (Rev 13.2).

### **Epoch B**

*‘After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.’ (Dan 7.7)*

The historic Roman Empire referred to in Dan 7.7 followed the fall of the Greek Empire. It was split into two regions, the Western and Eastern Empires. Dan 7.7 is seen by many to have a dual interpretation, whereby it looks beyond the historic empire to a future empire characterised by Rome (see later).

The end of Daniel’s 69<sup>th</sup> week occurs approximately midway in the reign of the historic Roman Empire and marks the crucifixion of the LORD (Dan 9.26). Shortly after this, Roman armies under Titus sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD. Again, Dan 9.26 can be seen to have dual interpretation, referring both to 70 AD and to a future invasion of the Jewish temple under the coming ‘prince’ or world ruler.

### **Epoch C**

A common interpretation is to identify a time gap of undisclosed duration between the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week and the start of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. This gap occurs between verses 26 and 27 of Daniel 9. A strong justification for this interpretation lies in the historical account; verse 26 was fulfilled at the crucifixion of Jesus and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, whilst there is no subsequent historical account corresponding to verse 27. Historically, the Roman Empire disintegrated around 300 AD and the person referred to in verse 27 is yet to appear. We are currently in the age of grace, or church age, corresponding to the period between weeks 69 and 70. This is a time for proclamation of the gospel.

The end of the church age and the imminence of week 70 can be identified by a number of very significant events:

- ◆ The return of the Jews to Israel
- ◆ World wide proclamation of the gospel
- ◆ A falling away from Biblical teaching (apostasy)
- ◆ Increased lawlessness
- ◆ The emergence of a 'New World Order' or 'One World System'
- ◆ Increased persecution of those who love Jesus.

These events are pointers to the end of the age, or what is referred to in scripture as 'the time of the end' (Dan 12.4)(Mat 24.14).

### **C1 The Return of the Jews to Israel**

What we focus on in this section is the rise of *Zionism* - a term referring to the future day when nations shall say:

*'... come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD .... for from Zion will go forth the law ...' (Mic 4.2)*

*'... the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion ... the city of the great King.'* (Ps 48.2)

Thus Zionism is *not* racism (as some maintain), rather, it refers to the final world state under Christ in the millennium (section **F**). Due to disobedience, the tribes of Israel were dispersed amongst the nations and Jerusalem became occupied by Gentile nations. However, Jesus pointed out that this period of exile from Palestine would come to an end as 'the times of the Gentiles' (Lk 21.24) was fulfilled. A time would come when the tribes of Israel would return in order to pave the way for the fulfilling of the above prophecies. God says:

*'I will say to the north, "Give them up!" ... bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth.'* (Isa 43.6)

The modern-day evidence for the regathering of Israel from the nations is astonishing:

- In 1878 the Berlin Congress of Nations gave the Jews in Israel greater privileges than had been accorded them for centuries, although they were still under Turkish rule.
- In the late 1800's anti-Semitism in Russia and Romania resulted in a rapidly increasing population of orthodox Jews living in Palestine. In particular, the year 1882 saw the first of a wave of emigration to Palestine as the first 'Aliyah' (ascent) got under way.
- By 1890 there were some 50,000 Jews in Palestine compared to only some 3,000 around 1840. These settlers rapidly set about turning a barren, dusty land into a land of vineyards and olive yards, and the change was significant even by the 1890's.
- In 1897 Theodor Herzl founded the political concept of a Sovereign Jewish State at the first Zionist Congress in Basle. This was a political solution to Jewish homelessness.

- In 1917 General Allenby liberated Jerusalem from the Turks and ever since the Jews have had access to the city. Many see this as fulfilling the ‘times of the Gentiles’.
- The Jewish State was established in May 1948, and David Ben Gurion became Israel’s first Prime Minister.
- The ‘Law of Return’ passed by Israel’s Parliament in 1950 opened the gates of Israel to whoever desired to return. Since then, Jews from over 60 countries have returned and the population of Israel reached some four million by the 1980’s. This is an 8,000% increase on the population in the 1890’s.
- Between 1958 and 1965 Israel’s mean annual growth rate of 13.6% in manufacturing was matched only by Japan.
- By the 1980’s Israel had high-tech industries, a highly developed banking system, a health system comparable to those in western Europe, and an educational system training 2 to 3 times more University students per 1,000 of the population compared to the UK.
- By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Tel-Aviv had gone from a handful of tents in 1910 to a thriving industrial city and seaport with a population of over 500,000.

Clearly, in just 100 years Israel has gone from obscurity to a modern and powerful nation. The Jews have rebuilt cities, developed modern industry, irrigated the desert, planted millions of trees, and produced abundant fruit. Israel is now virtually self-sufficient in foodstuffs. This is surely the start of the ‘blossoming’ of Israel spoken of in Isa 35. The LORD is fulfilling the prophecies of Ezekiel 37, when the ‘dry bones’ of Israel ‘live’ once more.

### *Rebuilding of the Temple*

At this point it is appropriate to examine one of the more difficult of Ezekiel’s prophecies made between 592 BC and about 570 BC. Ezekiel chapters 40-48 refer to a new temple which, to date, has not been built. Is it symbolic or a literal temple to be built in the future? Some scholars argue that it must be symbolic since *animal sacrifices* are mentioned in Ezek 40.38-43. How could sacrifices recommence after Christ’s sacrifice on the cross? After the shedding of His blood there was no longer any need for a sin offering (Heb 10.10,18). It is also argued that there is no temple in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21.22). So some maintain that Ezekiel’s temple is symbolic of the true worship of God by the present-day church or symbolic of the future reign of God when His presence and blessing fill the earth. Alternatively, some take an historic viewpoint and consider Ezekiel’s temple to be the blue print of the temple Zerubbabel *should* have built between 520-515 BC (Ezra 3,5,6). The temple was completed in 515 BC but the blue print seems not to have been followed due to disobedience and various disputes.

Having said this, a literal, future temple can be justified on the following grounds:

- There is an incredible amount of detail that would be unnecessary and meaningless if the temple were symbolic. In fact, the LORD instructs Ezekiel to ‘measure the plan’ and ‘make known the design of the house’ (Ezek 43.10,11), which suggests the details are not to be ignored.



- The temple could be the millennial temple from which the LORD reigns (see section **F4**). It is certainly not the one referred to in Rev 21, which refers to the new heaven and the new earth. As such, this new earthly temple will be frequented by mortal man (flesh and blood) who still has an inherently sinful nature. Is it right that sinful man sees the LORD *face to face* without some symbolic or ceremonial recognition of His holiness? Each time a believer comes into the presence of the Holy Father through prayer, it is always through the sanctification of Jesus' blood. Because of our inherently sinful nature, we are symbolically cleansed by His blood each time we come into God's presence through prayer. In the same way, the LORD declares that the priests who draw near to Him shall offer a symbolic or ceremonial sin offering (Ezek 44.15-27). Also, the symbolism and ceremony of sin, guilt and grain offering (Ezek 46.20) will be very meaningful to millennial Israel, given her background of religious symbolism.
- The Antichrist puts a stop to sacrifices and grain offering in the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (see **D1**), implying that these must be reinstated in some future temple. Rev 11.1,2 probably refers to this temple.
- Messianic Jews believe in the temple restoration. One suggested location is above the Western Wall plaza and close to the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aksa Mosque.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that a new temple will be built in the foreseeable future.

## **C2 Worldwide Proclamation of the Gospel**

For some 1500 years the scriptures were 'locked' in the Latin tongue and were unreadable to the vast majority of the people. Since then the scriptures have been translated into many languages, and over the past 50 years the gospel has been broadcast by radio into most parts of the world. For example, about 92% of the world's population have access to the NT in their own language, and about 99% of the world's population can hear gospel broadcasting in their own language (assuming they have a radio or the Internet). This is a clear fulfilment of Mat 24.14:

*'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end (of the age) will come'.*

On these figures, we must be very close to the end of this age.

## **C3 Apostasy**

Jesus hinted at a falling away from the Christian faith at the end of the age: '...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?' (Lk 18.8). Paul clarifies His point: '...the day of the Lord...will not come unless the *apostasy* comes first' (2 Thes 2.3). Over the past 50 years this 'falling away' from basic Biblical truth has gathered momentum, particularly under the banner of multifaith and ecumenical worship. We are encouraged to share 'worship' with people of other faiths, particularly with Muslims and Jews. But *who* are we collectively worshipping? Certainly not the risen Christ! New laws, particularly the Universal Law of Human Rights and various forms of religious hatred law, make it difficult to proclaim the basic gospel i.e. Jesus is the only way to God (Jn Seventieth\_Week

14.6) without causing ‘discomfort’ or ‘insult’ to other faiths. Promoters of this basic gospel are labelled as ‘fundamentalists’ by the media, but in reality they are simply Christians who take the Bible at its word.

A falling away is also seen in the established church. On the one hand, the Anglican Church is now split over gay clergy, and on the other hand, a false ‘prosperity and experiential gospel’ is promoted by many Pentecostal churches. Clearly, Christians are falling way and paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4.1).

#### **C4 Increased Lawlessness**

Jesus explicitly said that the end of this current age would be characterized by increased lawlessness (Mat 24.12). Crime has increased dramatically in the last 50 years. For example, aggravated assault in the US increased from 60 per 100,000 to over 440 per 100,000 between 1957 and 1992 [FBI statistics]. The London and Madrid bombings were new forms of terror, and 9-11 was the worst-ever act of terrorism. Few would deny that they feel less secure now than they did 20 or 30 years ago. Naturally, this results in a self-preservation attitude, whereby fear and selfishness replace the open, trusting and loving nature of people. Jesus said ‘the love of many will grow cold’.

#### **C5 A New World Order – the Revived Roman Empire**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the start of all the prophesied events associated with ‘the end of time’. It saw the returning of the Jews to Israel and the blossoming of Israel, worldwide proclamation of the gospel, the seeds of apostasy, and greatly increased lawlessness. How many more indicators do we need in order to recognise the imminence of the LORD’s return?

There is one more very prominent indicator that was not visible 100 years ago, but can now be seen. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of electronic communications, starting with radio in the early 1900’s. The 50’s saw the development of transistor-based technology, the 60’s and 70’s saw worldwide television and bar-coded shopping, and by the 90’s the world was linked by the Internet and computerised banking. At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century most people in the westernised world were on at least one computer system, if only to register them for work via a social security number. Like it or not, we are now computer controlled, with freedom to shop or travel granted or barred by computers. What a contrast to the freedom given by God to man in the Garden of Eden (Gen 1)!

All this technology provides the necessary *control* basis for the final world system – a revived form of the historic Roman Empire. The concept of a revived Roman Empire needs scriptural justification. Consider the following scriptures:

- ◆ Dan 2.31-35. This is Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. The head of the statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar was made of fine gold and it denoted the ‘royal’ characteristic of the king of Babylon. The breast and belly of the statue denoted two subsequent and inferior empires (the Persian and Greek Empires). The two iron legs and feet of the statue denoted the eastern and western arms of the historic Roman Empire.

But note this; the feet of the statue (both parts of the Roman Empire) are struck by a 'stone cut without hands' (a reference to Christ). At this point, all worldly empires are destroyed forever and replaced by the kingdom of God on earth. The significant point here is that *the fourth and final World Empire (Rome) must be in existence in some form at the end of the church age in order for Christ to destroy it! Since the historic Roman Empire was destroyed, a form of this empire must be revived towards the end of this current age. There are really only four world empires in this prophecy (see Dan 7.3).*

It is also important to note that the stone (Christ) crushes feet made partly of iron and partly of clay. Since iron and clay do not adhere, the implication is that the final form of the Roman Empire will comprise elements that will not naturally combine (more on this later).

- ◆ Dan 7.3-7. This again refers to four world empires, the fourth undoubtedly being Roman. But, as with Nebuchadnezzar's statue, Dan 7.7 (see section **B**) looks beyond the historic Roman Empire to an end-time form of this empire. Such an interpretation becomes clear from the rest of Dan 7 and from parallel scriptures in Rev 13 and 17. Specifically, just as Rome was strong, brutal, and crushing, so the final form of this empire will be strong, brutal, and crushing. Daniel refers to it as a 'terrifying beast'.
- ◆ Revelation 17.3. This fills in more of the picture. It refers to a beast with seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are seven mountains and also seven kings (Rev 17.9,10). In scripture a 'mountain' refers to a kingdom – hence the kings. For example, 'In the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains...' (Isa 2.2), a reference to the replacement of all world kingdoms by Christ's Kingdom at the end of this age. This is seen again in Dan 2.35; 'the stone that struck the statue became a *great mountain* and filled the whole world'. At this point in time, Christ will be *king* over all the earth (Zech 14.9). So who are the seven kings of Rev 17.10?

*'and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while' (Rev 17.10)*

This is a reference to seven worldly kings or rulers or governmental systems. They can be identified as the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman and *Revived Roman* Empires. The 'one is' refers to the current Roman Empire at the time of writing of Revelation, and 'the other has not yet come' refers to a future and final world empire that will have a short life compared to the previous six empires. *The important point here is that this seventh governmental system must be a form of the Roman Empire to correlate with Dan 7.7, which effectively extends the historic Roman Empire to the end of the current age.*

Note that the beast of Rev 17.3 also has ten horns. Ten horns also appear in Dan 7.7 and Rev 13.1. A horn in scripture refers to a king (Rev 17.12) and the significant point here is that ten world leaders or governmental systems appear *right at the end of this current age*. Their objective is to give a final, short-lived, satanically inspired

push to the beast of world government – a scenario not yet seen on earth – *a scenario of short-lived worldwide control by a person and his one-world governmental system*. In conclusion, we can view the beast of Rev 17.3 as symbolising all world governmental systems, including the final, short-lived, revived form of the Roman Empire.

- ◆ Rev 13.3. When read in conjunction with Rev 17.10, this verse could be seen as a reference to the seventh and final world governmental system. In this context, the verse again underscores the concept of a revived Roman Empire. One of the ‘heads’ of the beast appears to be ‘slain’, which can be taken as the destruction of the historic Roman Empire. However, the ‘fatal’ head wound is healed and the empire revives – to the amazement of the world.

### *An Ecclesiastical Babylon*

Revelation 17 also refers to the ‘great harlot’; the vision is of a female who is living an immoral life. It is interesting that the church is often referred to as being female. Consider the following parallels:

- Christ is head of the church just as man is head of the *woman* (Eph 5.23).
- The apostolic church is ‘spiritual Israel’ and is associated with ‘racial Israel’, which is referred to as an unfaithful *wife* in the OT.
- The church is seen as a ‘*bride* adorned for her husband’ in Rev 21.2.

These parallels suggest that the harlot of Rev 17 portrays a *corrupt, immoral, and false church* spread throughout the nations – the ‘many waters’ of Rev 17.1.

There are more indications in Rev 17 that the harlot is a false church. First, she is dressed in ‘purple and scarlet’, and adorned with ‘gold, precious stones and pearls’ (Rev 17.4). This is a picture of a rich church. Secondly, she persecutes and martyrs true believers in Christ (Rev 17.6), as did the Roman Church in the Middle Ages. Third, this church sits on ‘seven mountains’ (Rev 17.9). Since the church did not exist until the apostolic era, v9 cannot refer to the historic seven world empires in this context. One interpretation is that this false church is cited in Rome, since Rome was built on seven hills. Finally, the false church is actually destroyed by the end time world system (Rev 17.16). This too is understandable since the end time world ruler will exult himself over all people (2 Thes 2.4), whilst this church, although false, will have Christ as figurehead rather than himself. Combining these four scenarios leads to a very plausible conclusion; *the harlot of Rev 17 appears to be the Vatican-based Roman Catholic Church*.

We thus have an *ecclesiastical Babylon* on the world scene at the end of this age. The vision is of the worldwide Catholic church sitting on (and by implication, controlling) a beastly form of world empire at the end of this current age.

### *A Commercial Babylon*

Revelation 18 continues the vision of an end time Babylon, but now the picture is very much one of *trade*. We see worldwide trade involving merchant ships (Rev 18.17-19), great wealth (Rev 18.3,17,19), diverse products (Rev 18.12,13), and widespread

corruption (Rev 18.3). Clearly, this could be describing the current world trading system! The significant point here is that this great trading system collapses very suddenly ('in one hour', Rev 18.17), and God's people are called to 'come out of her' before such judgement occurs (Rev 18.4).

We can conjecture as to how such a collapse could happen. As mentioned, we live in a computer-controlled society, where transactions and movements are increasingly sanctioned or barred by computer. The cashless society is increasingly dominant. At the local scene, personal credit worthiness can be instantly checked at the shop till, and Visa entry to a country is now sanctioned by biometric identification of an individual. On a world-wide scene, trading systems are linked by fast data communications and large computers, such that trade figures in one country instantaneously affect those in other countries. All this is extremely convenient and the complexity of such a system is a marvel of modern technology. However, it is the very complexity of such a system that could destroy it. It is fragile and vulnerable. For example, increased lawlessness, reflected in international terrorism, could eventually cause widespread computer failure, resulting in the prophesied economic collapse.

### *The European Union*

We are considering the concept of a revived, pagan, Roman Empire, and the European Union (EU) is very much at the centre of such a scenario. A Roman revival has in fact been at the heart of Europe's leaders and aristocracy for over 1,000 years. For example, in 800AD the Pope crowned Charlemagne (a Roman Catholic) 'Emperor of the Romans', and his objective was a *unified Christian Empire*. Later, in 962AD, the Pope crowned the German king Otto the Great '*Holy Roman Emperor*'. Between the 14th and 18th centuries the Habsburg family in Europe continued the idea of a unified Christian Empire. Then, in 1936, Mussolini (a Roman Catholic) perceived himself as a modern-day Caesar *and declared the resurrection of the old Roman Empire!* Today, the idea of a theocratic *United States of Europe* is pursued by the Habsburgs, secret societies, and by the Vatican, and at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we see the following:

- ◆ An EU flag comprising 12 gold stars on a blue background. This does *not* depict 12 nations. Rather, it was inspired by the halo of 12 stars around pictures of the Madonna in Strasbourg Cathedral, and is a perversion of Rev 12.1.
- ◆ Claims that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church in Europe, the long-term objective being to 'Romanise' the Protestant church, or eliminate it. 'Fringe' churches, such as the Pentecostal church are in danger of being labelled as 'cults'.
- ◆ France, one of the most influential countries in the EU (and very much under the rule of the historic Roman Empire), is very much a pagan and secular society with a Roman Catholic flavour.
- ◆ The progressive elimination of the identity of individual countries in the EU, with the objective of creating a Federal State of Europe with its own Constitution.
- ◆ The EU Constitution (now revised as a Treaty) is essentially pagan, with the concept of 'God' largely eliminated.

- ◆ The progressive elimination of the power of individual governments, as European law from Brussels takes dominance.
- ◆ The relentless push towards a common currency (the Euro).
- ◆ The emergence of a European army, independent of NATO.
- ◆ The emergence of a very powerful trading block to rival America.
- ◆ The use of large and powerful computers in Europe to control every individual in the EU.
- ◆ Despite great efforts to unify Europe, individual nations still fight their corner. This disunity is foreseen in Dan 2.41-43, which describes this end-time world system as 'iron and clay'. It will be partly strong and partly weak, but, like iron and clay, the individual nations will never adhere together.

### *Summary*

In conclusion, the strong Roman influence of Europe, both historically and religiously, together with the characteristics of an increasingly large trading block, a common currency, forced unification to a federal state, unelected political control (the EU Commission), and the heartless computer control of individuals, makes the EU a strong candidate for the final form of Daniel's fourth empire. Currently America and the US dollar dominate world trade, but prophecy points to Rome and Europe, not America. In fact, it is difficult to see America at all in prophecy.

The picture drawn in Rev 17 and 18 is of a final commercial and pagan world system that is corrupt and ripe for judgement. It has a form of godliness in the Roman Catholic Church, but this is false and corrupt and also ripe for judgement. The scenario looks very like a revived Roman Empire. This fourth and final world empire is worldwide (Dan 7.23, Rev 13.3), indicating that the revived empire is not restricted to the geographic region of the old Roman Empire. The EU could therefore be the seed of this final global empire, with America either absorbed into, or removed, from the scenario. Whatever the final form, it is destroyed almost overnight i.e. 'in one hour' (Rev 18.17). Here we have a more graphic description of the destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's statue (epitomising all world empires) by a 'stone' (Rev 18.21). The revived Roman Empire, probably seeded by the EU, will therefore be the culmination of godlessness, blasphemy and corruption, and it will be completely destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ.

## **C6    *The Tribulation of the Church***

First it is necessary to distinguish 'the tribulation' from 'the wrath of God'. The church suffers tribulation (persecution) but it does not come under the wrath of God. Just prior to the return of Christ (at the end of the church age), God will pour out His judgement upon a rebellious world, but the church is either removed from the scene or supernaturally protected through this time of wrath (Jn 3.36, 5.24, Rom 5.9, Rev 3.10). The church age terminates at the rapture of the gospel-preaching church (Mat 24.14).

The true church of Christ has suffered persecution or tribulation from apostolic times and so this is nothing new. Jesus told His followers to expect persecution (Jn 15.20). In the Middle Ages some 50 million Christians were martyred for their faith under the Inquisition. That is, the Roman Catholic Church persecuted the saints. Taking the 'woman' of Rev 17 as a reference to 'ecclesiastical' Babylon, headed by the Vatican, then the Inquisition can be seen in Rev 17.6. Today, at the end of Epoch C, only a handful of countries in the world are relatively free from persecution, mainly the 'westernised' countries. An outstanding question for the end-time church is, 'will persecution get more intense', or 'will there be worldwide revival', as some maintain? Jesus was quite clear on this. The end of the church age will be characterized by universal hatred of those who name the name of Jesus (Mat 24.9). It will be a time of endurance, not glossy revival (Mat 24.13). Summarising, the church has suffered tribulation from apostolic times, but, unless one holds a *Pretribulation* viewpoint, there are indications that the end-time church will suffer *great* tribulation (Mat 24.21, Rev 7.14).

Nevertheless, despite hardships and hatred, the true church will be busy preaching the eternal gospel on a worldwide scale up to the end of the age of grace (Mat 24.14). Clearly, this is now happening via Christian radio and TV, and via Christian web sites on the Internet. Time is short, since over 99% of the world's 6 billion people can now hear broadcasts of the Christian message if they have a radio or the Internet. The end must be very close, perhaps within a generation. A significant point here is that such worldwide Christian activity may well be impossible if the church was attempting to do this under the reign of the Antichrist, since Christian activity is targeted (Rev 13.7). There is a time of conflict (war) with the Antichrist during which 'the saints' are 'overcome'. So, at the very least, worldwide evangelism would be severely curtailed. This gives some justification for the *Pretribulation* view, where the true church of Christ is removed prior to the reign of the Antichrist (week 70).

### **C7 Rapture of the Church (*Pretribulation view*)**

The so-called rapture refers to the sudden and supernatural removal of the church, as described in 1 Thes 4.17. The *Pretribulation* view is that the church is removed before the final, intense tribulation under the Antichrist. A justification for this scenario comes from 2 Thes 2.8. It starts '*and then the lawless one will be revealed...*'. A specific event must happen before 'the lawless one is revealed'. What is it? Verse 7 is the key:

*'...only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.'* (2 Thes 2.7 NKJ)

Note that the NKJ version uses the upper case for the pronoun 'he', indicating nothing less than the Holy Spirit. This is understandable since nothing less than the Holy Spirit (the power of God) would have the power to restrain Satan and his earthly instrument, the 'lawless one', the Antichrist. The Holy Spirit is 'taken out of the way', which could mean His removal from the earthly scene, or that He simply 'steps aside'. Assuming the former, it follows that the church must also be removed (raptured), since it is in-dwelt by Him. To simply take the Holy Spirit out of the way, without the church would leave the church powerless. Also, Jesus promised that He would never leave us alone.

On these assumptions, the Antichrist is revealed to the world once the church and the Holy Spirit are removed, and Pretribulationism assumes this revelation occurs at the start of week 70. Although they now see him (he is *revealed*) the world is initially deceived and believes a lie (v11). The coming of the Antichrist is characterised by all power and signs, false wonders and *deception* (2 Thes 2.8-10).

Just prior to the rapture, times will be hard for believers. They will be brought before courts, some will be imprisoned and some will be quietly disposed of, as in many countries today (Lk 21.12-19, Rev 13.10). Persecution will have spread to *all nations* – there will be no escape (Mat 24.9), and many will fall away from the faith (Mat 24.10). The message of Jesus to His end-time church is to ‘hang on’ until the end (Mat 24.13). Because of their perseverance, these believers are promised deliverance from the wrath of God shortly to come on the world (Rev 3.10). They are the true end-time church, similar to the Philadelphia type church of the apostolic era (Rev 3.7-13).

As stated, despite persecution, the church continues to proclaim the gospel to the very end of the age of grace (Mat 24.14) which, in turn, surely means that the mark of the beast (Rev 13.16,17) has not yet been implemented. How else could Christians still be living and working as normal within society? Christians must still be working normally i.e. alongside unbelievers, up to the point of the rapture. Consider

*‘then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, one will be taken, and one will be left’.* (Mat 24.40,41, Lk 17.35).

Do these verses refer to the taking of the saints (the rapture) or to the taking of the wicked (for judgement)? Close scrutiny of this and related texts points to the rapture, and Paul sees it like this:

*‘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 Thes 4.17).

Strength of Pretribulationism:

- ◆ The rapture or taking away of the church to be with Christ is implied in Mat 24.40,41, and Lk 17.34,35, just as Noah was removed supernaturally before the flood. The implication is that believers are working within a normal social environment alongside unbelievers, enabling them to preach the gospel with some freedom. This is not compatible with severe persecution under the Antichrist, and so supports the idea of a Pretribulation rapture.

Weakness of Pretribulationism:

- ◆ Removal of the ‘restraint’ does not automatically imply the simultaneous removal (rapture) of the church. It is possible that the Holy Spirit could simply ‘step aside’, whilst remaining with the church on earth. The church would then suffer persecution under the Antichrist, and this helps identify the persecuted saints in Rev 13.7,10, Rev 14.12 and Rev 20.4. We will return to this point under epoch D.



## **Epoch D – the first half of Week 70**

Here we start the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel, a period of seven years. In order to introduce the concepts involved during this brief but dramatic period, it is helpful to take the widely held Pretribulation viewpoint and consider its implication. With this interpretation, the ‘restrainer’ is removed at the start of week 70 and ‘the lawless one’ is revealed. As stated, initially at least, it seems the world is deceived by him (2 Thes 2.10,11)(Rev 13.3,4), and the lawless, Satanic side of this person is veiled. For some 3½ years, to mid-week, the world wonders after this strong world ruler who appears to offer governmental stability. He makes a seven-year covenant with Israel, and exacts severe persecution upon those who believe in Jesus. Exactly who these saints are is discussed in section **D4**.

It is important to distinguish between world governmental *systems* and world *leaders*. The final world system (or ‘mountain’ in scripture) is seen as the legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (Dan 2.33), the terrifying iron-toothed beast of Dan 7.7, and the seventh head of the beast in Rev 13.1, 17.3. The vision of a seven-headed beast implies that the final world system (the ‘seventh’) embodies the royalty, learning, brutality, godlessness, and corruption of the six previous world systems, from Egypt to historic Rome. In addition, scripture also partly identifies *individuals* who head up the final world system, as discussed below.

### **D1 A World Ruler – the Beast out of the Sea**

A ‘summary’ view of world empires is given by the four *beasts* of Dan 7. Here, the fourth beast has ten horns (v8) and is widely understood to refer to both historic Rome and to its end-time revived form. More detail is given in Rev 13.1, where the final beast has *seven heads* as well as ten horns. One of the heads appears to have suffered a fatal wound through war, but is then healed (Rev 13.3,14). As discussed, this could be a reference to the destruction of historic Rome, and its ‘miraculous’ revival as the seventh head and new Roman Empire.

A ‘horn’ in scripture is a king or political ruler (Dan 7.24, Rev 17.12), and these could be spread throughout the world as ten interlinked governmental/military systems, making a one-world system. A ‘little’ horn then comes up amongst them and displaces three of the ten (Dan 7.8). This is the ‘man of lawlessness’ (2 Thes 2.3), the end-time world ruler who emerges from ‘the sea’ of unregenerate nations (Rev 13.1).

#### *His Nationality and Country of Origin*

The coming world ruler will probably be a descendant of one of the four subdivisions of Alexander’s Empire:

*‘...but as soon as he was mighty, the large horn (Alexander) was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns (his generals)... out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great...’ (Dan 8.8,9)*

This prophecy refers to Antiochus IV (the small horn), later called Antiochus *Epiphanes*, who reigned Asia Minor and Syria from 175 BC. At Alexander’s death in 323 BC, his kingdom was divided amongst his four generals, Ptolemy, Cassander, Lysimachus and

Seleucus. The Seleucid Dynasty became master of Asia Minor, Syria, and the more westerly of Alexander's eastern dominions, and this line of kings bore the name of *Antiochus*. This infamous individual invaded Jerusalem, where he stopped the Jewish sacrifices (Dan 8.11) and erected a Greek altar on the site of the old one; the Apocrypha refers to this as the *abomination of desolation* (1 Macc 1.54). In later years Antiochus called himself (Theos) Epiphanes on coins, meaning (god) manifest, an apparent fulfilment of Dan 8.11. Clearly then, Dan 8 refers to this historic character. On the other hand, Daniel is told that the vision pertains *to the time of the end* (Dan 8.17,19), or *to many days in the future* (Dan 8.26). To accommodate both historical and future aspects we conclude that Dan 8 has *dual interpretation*. Note for example, that Antiochus did not directly oppose Christ (Dan 8.25), and so this verse could allude to the final future conflict at Christ's Second Coming (Rev 17.13,14). We can say that Antiochus IV was a 'type' of the final world ruler, and the division between historical and future aspects of Dan 8 is at v8 and v22. From v9 and v23 onwards, the vision can be regarded as 'dual' – pertaining to both Antiochus IV Epiphanes and to the final world ruler. Thus, the final world ruler is the 'little horn' of Dan 7.8,20, the 'small horn' of Dan 8.9, the 'insolent king' of Dan 8.23, the 'despicable person' of Dan 11.21, and the 'beast' of Rev 13.1, 19.19.

Accepting a dual interpretation, the country of origin of the world ruler might be deduced by examining Alexander's Empire. According to Dan 8.9, the *small horn* is to come from one of the four regions occupied by the generals succeeding Alexander; namely, from Egypt, Syria, the dominions of Turkey, or Greece itself. In Dan 11 the final world ruler is in conflict with the kings of the north and south (Syria and Egypt, respectively), so these countries tend to be eliminated. Of Turkey and Greece, the latter is more probable since Greece is compatible with Dan 8.9 and Antiochus IV was of Grecian origin. Also, Greece is specifically identified as opposing Israel just prior to the LORD's Second Coming (Zech 9.13).

Although the world ruler may *arise* from Greece, his background will initially make him acceptable to the returned Jews in Israel since they sign a seven-year treaty with him (see **D3**). So he could well be a *Jew*. A curious phrase is used in Dan 11.37: speaking of the end-time world ruler, it says, '*He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers...*'. Prior to the days of Moses, the Hebrews knew God generally as the 'God of the Fathers', and so Dan 11.37 again suggests he is a Jew.

### *His Attributes and Character*

A description of the end-time world ruler is given in Dan 11.20-45 and these verses give insight into his character and abilities.

- ◆ He is has no official authority and so comes to power by *deception* and *intrigue* (Dan 11.21,23, Rev 6.2). This suggests a *cunning*, *devious*, *insolent* and *shrewd* person. The dual interpretation of Dan 8.23-25 supports this conclusion.
- ◆ Daniel 7 gives a vision of four world empires (beasts), the fourth being historic Rome and its final, end-time form. Verse 8 refers to a *little horn* that will rule the final form of the Roman Empire. This horn has the *eyes of a man*, implying that he has *worldly*

*wisdom*, and is *perceptive*. He probably has a superior intellect, bearing in mind that his power comes from Satan (Dan 8. 24, Rev 13.2).

- ◆ *Arrogance* often goes hand in hand with those blessed with a good intellect and this leader is no exception (Dan 7.8, 8.25, 11.36). His arrogance will even extend to blasphemy against God (Dan 11.36, Rev 13.6).

### *His Activities*

The activities and infamous achievements of his forerunner, Antiochus IV, are indicators of the activities of the future world leader:

- ◆ Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom decreeing that everyone leave his or her laws (1 Macc 1.41,42,49). Compare this with ‘... *and he (the world ruler) will intend to make alterations in times and in law...*’ (Dan 7.25).
- ◆ Antiochus forbade sacrifices in the Jewish temple (1 Macc 1.45, Dan 8.11). Compare this with ‘... *but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice...*’ (Dan 9.27).
- ◆ Antiochus polluted the holy temple by sacrificing swine’s flesh (Dan 8.13, 1 Macc 1.46,47). He also set up an *abomination* upon the altar (1 Mac 6.7). Compare this with Dan 9.27, 11.31.
- ◆ Antiochus put to death all those who would not obey him (1 Macc 1.50,62-64). Compare this with Rev 13.15.
- ◆ Antiochus persecuted the Jews for some 3½ years. Compare this with Dan 12.7 and Rev 12.6, which probably refer to the persecution of Israel in the latter half of week 70. Note that ‘the saints’ (possibly new believers in Jesus after the rapture of the church) are also persecuted by the final world ruler (Rev 13.7).
- ◆ Antiochus magnified himself above others (Dan 8.11) and called himself ‘god manifest’ on coins in the later years of his reign. Compare this with Dan 11.36, 2 Thes 2.4, and Rev 13.5,6,15.

The country of origin, character and activities of Antiochus IV are therefore indicative of the final world ruler.

## **D2 A False Prophet – the Beast out of the Earth**

Revelation 13 refers to the beast ‘from the sea’ and to the beast ‘from the earth’. Earth is a translation of the Greek *ghay* meaning ‘the whole of the globe’. The two beasts, together with Satan, form an unholy trinity in direct opposition to the holy Trinity in scripture (Rev 16.13). The common interpretation is to regard the beast from the sea as the final Antichrist who will focus all of his powers against Jesus and His followers. He is taken to be a false Christ or false Messiah in the sense that a) he stages a false resurrection (Rev 13.14), b) he accepts worship (Rev 13.15), c) he wears a crown and conquers all his enemies (Rev 6.2), and d) he even rides a white horse (Rev 6.2) just as Christ does at His Second Coming (Rev 19.11). The beast from the earth is a false prophet (Rev 19.20) and

the common interpretation is that he is a counterfeit Holy Spirit. His role is to perform miracles and force worship of the first beast.

An alternative viewpoint of this unholy trinity is as follows. Consider the following parallels:

- ◆ Christ had all the authority of the Godhead; likewise, the beast from the earth exercises all the authority of the beast from the sea (Rev 13.12).
- ◆ Christ had a prophetic role and pointed to God the Father; likewise, the beast from the earth is a (false) prophet and points to the beast from the sea (Rev 13.12-15). In turn, the beast from the sea exalts himself as God (Dan 7.25, 11.36, 2 Thes 2.4, Rev 13.4,5).
- ◆ Christ performed miracles; likewise, the beast from the earth performs miracles (Rev 13.13,14).

From these parallels we might identify the beast from the earth as the Antichrist, and the first beast as a false god (bearing in mind that the first beast is distinctly anti-God (Rev 13.6) and sets himself up as God (2 Thes 2.4)(Dan 11.36). Satan completes the unholy trinity as the enabling power (mimicking the Holy Spirit). Linking the ‘ecclesiastical’ member of this trinity to the Antichrist is not unreasonable, bearing in mind that an ecclesiastical *Babylon* is described in Rev 17, with its implied links to Rome (section C5). Certainly, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin and Wesley associated the Papacy with the Antichrist and this teaching gave rise to the Protestant Reformation. It seems that, once again, the Papacy could persecute God’s people (Rev 17.6).

<p><b>7 year treaty (covenant) commences</b></p> <p><b>Gog - Magog Invasion?</b></p>	<p><b>3½ years</b></p> <p><b>Israel dwells in peace and safety</b></p>
<p><b>Treaty broken</b></p> <p><b>Regular sacrifices abolished</b></p> <p><b>Armageddon</b></p> <p><b>Second Coming</b></p>	<p><b>3½ years</b></p> <p><b>Jacob’s trouble</b></p>

Table 3 : Israel during Week 70

**D3 A Covenant with Israel – Israel Invaded?**

The military supremacy of this end-time leader enables him to make a ‘peace treaty’ or ‘covenant’ with Israel at the start of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (Dan 9.27). Nations will find it difficult to challenge him and so Israel will feel quite safe in making such a treaty. In reality, they make a ‘covenant with hell’ (Isa 28.15,18), which is broken midweek, but for 3½ years Israel, and particularly Jerusalem, will be at peace under the rule of gentile nations (Rev 11.2). A possible scenario for Israel during week 70 is shown in Table 3.

### *The Gog- Magog Invasion of Israel*

Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe a great end-time invasion of Israel, although many scholars agree that the exact chronological placing of this invasion within the end-time scenario is obscure. According to the usual definition of ‘truth’, the true timing must fit the known facts – it must fit the prophetic detail. Let’s examine the key prophetic details concerning this invasion:

- The invader will be a confederacy of nations from ‘the remote parts of the north’ (Ezek 38.15). The chief perpetrator will be ‘Gog of the land of Magog’ (Ezek 38.2). Historically, Gog referred to a people at the extremities of the then known world, and so it could be a symbolic reference to peoples far from Israel. A Gog-Magog invasion of Israel is also mentioned in Rev 20.8. Some scholars see this as the same as Ezekiel’s invasion. If this is true, then the invasion occurs *after* the millennium (Rev 20.7,8).
- This confederacy will include other nations, particularly Iran (Persia), Ethiopia, Put, and Gomer (Ezek 38.5,6). Put is associated with Africa, possibly Libya, whilst Gomer is probably identified with an Aryan group who conquered Armenia from their Ukrainian homeland.
- The invasion cannot occur until Israel has been gathered from the nations, *and is living securely* (Ezek 38.8). For an invasion to occur, Israel would first need to lay down her defences (Ezek 38.11). To date this is certainly not the case, and Israel is very *insecure*. Clearly, a temporary security is achieved under her 7-year treaty with the beast and so Israel could possibly be invaded before this treaty is broken mid-week (see Table 3). But there is an alternative scenario. During the millennium (see section **F**) Israel will live very securely under the theocratic reign of Christ. She will have no need of weapons since nations will have turned swords into plowshares, and will no longer learn war (Isa 2.4). An invasion could therefore occur at the end of the millennium.
- The invader’s use *primitive* weapons (bows and arrows, spears and shields) (Ezek 39.9). This description could be symbolic, since these were the weapons of Ezekiel’s day, but this view is not compatible with the fact that Israel will *burn* these combustible weapons for fuel for 7 years! (Ezek 39.9,10). Also, it seems a characteristic of the millennium is that it will be non-industrial (section **F7**). So any war at the end of the millennium will indeed have to be fought with primitive, combustible weapons!
- The invaders do not appear to reach Jerusalem; rather, they *fall on the mountains of Israel and in the open field* (Ezek 39.4,5). This seems incompatible with the great end-time battle described in Zech 14.2, when Jerusalem is *captured*.
- The invasion is led by ‘Gog’ (which could be a specific people, or symbolic of anti-God forces). But it is significant that it involves *specific* nations and that there is no mention of the ‘beast’ of Revelation. Contrast Ezekiel’s invasion with that of Rev 19 and Zech 14. Here we see the end-time world ruler, the beast, leading ‘the kings of the earth’ against Christ and His army. This end-time invasion appears to involve *all* nations (Zech 14.2) and *all* world leaders (Rev 19.19). It is the infamous end-time war of Armageddon (Rev 16.16).

- The invader is supernaturally defeated i.e. by God's intervention. The intervention is in the form of extreme weather (extreme rain and hail) and also by fire and brimstone – probably similar to that which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Again, this seems incompatible with the battle in Zech 14. In this battle, the Lord defeats the invasion by a *flesh destroying 'plague'* (Zech 14.12). A neutron bomb has a similar effect. The reference to 'horses and camels' etc. in (Ezek 14.15) could be symbolic in this case since no other detail is given.

To summarise, this prophetic detail suggests that the Gog-Magog invasion of Israel occurs *at the end of the millennium*, and that it is a separate event to that described in Zech 14 and Rev 19.17-21. Two separate invasions are implied by the nations involved, the leadership of the invaders, the 'success' or lack of success of the invasion, the way God defeats the invasion, and the type of weapons used. Indeed, Rev 20.7,8 strongly implies two separate invasions since the Gog-Magog invasion occurs *after* the millennium, whilst Armageddon occurs *prior* to the millennium.

#### **D4 Persecution of Believers**

Scripture quite clearly states that some 'saints' are persecuted by the world ruler (Dan 7.21,25, Rev 13.7) and that this continues for '42 months' (Rev 13.5). Who are these saints?

##### *Pretribulation View*

As already mentioned, this viewpoint sees the church removed from earth just before the start of week 70 (see Table 2). We can therefore conjecture that the saints are *new converts* to Christianity. The sudden and supernatural removal of the church no doubt has a dramatic effect upon those left behind, and many turn to Christ having been convinced by such events that the Bible is true. They are, however, extremely vulnerable on the thesis that the Holy Spirit has been removed (as implied by 2 Thes 2.17). The world ruler is granted supremacy over them and they are defeated and shattered by Satanic power (Dan 12.7)(Rev 13.7). Many die in the LORD (Rev 14.13) and, in the absence of the church, it is left to an angel to preach the gospel to an unbelieving world (Rev 14.6,7). We note in passing that it is not essential for the Holy Spirit to be removed from the earth at the same time as the church; all that is required is for the Holy Spirit to 'step aside' or 'get out of the way' at midweek.

Another possibility is that these saints are Israelites (Daniel's people, Dan 12.1) who suffer under the great tribulation of Israel (see later).

##### *Midtribulation View*

Under the Midtribulation viewpoint, believers are raptured at the end of the reign of the Antichrist but before the time of the wrath of God. They therefore suffer great tribulation under the Antichrist. The saints of Rev 13.7,10 and Rev 14.12 are now understood to be the church, and so, with this viewpoint, the church age ends in the middle of week 70.

For the first 3½ years of week 70, the world appears to be euphoric. Here is a world leader who grants Middle East peace and gives firm political rule to the nations. The world recognises a revived form of Roman Empire (Rev 13.3) with all its prosperity and might, and is amazed (Rev 13.3). The significant point is that, at this point in time, the world does not recognise the true evil of the system or its leader. Up to this point, the ‘mystery of lawlessness’ (2 Thes 2.7) is at work but is not apparent to a blind world. An ecclesiastical leader – the ‘beast of the earth’, has deceived them (Rev 13.14). In particular, the true nature of the world leader, the ‘lawless one’ (2 Thes 2.8), has not yet been revealed. This will only be revealed to the world and to Israel after the removal of the church and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit. *On the other hand, believers in Christ will be only too aware of his identity, as explained below.*

We have seen that the Babylon of Rev 17 and 18 is a collective name for all the apostate, corrupt, blasphemous, immoral, godless commercial world systems. As mentioned in section **C5**, it commences with the first kingdom (Egyptian) and ends with the revived Roman Empire. These Babylon-type systems are described as being ‘drunk with the blood of the saints’ (Rev 17.6, 18.24), a reference to the martyrdom of all godly people over the ages, from the prophets through to the 21<sup>st</sup> century saints (Rev 18.24). This persecution gains momentum during the first half of week 70, when the world military leader ‘wages war with the saints’ (Rev 13.7).

What sort of war is envisaged? It is unlikely to be a military one due to the military supremacy of the world leader. It is much more likely to be one of attrition, with a gradual *wearing down* (Dan 7.25 RSV) of believers in Jesus, possibly through laws biased against them. As discussed, the seeds of such law are already embedded in European law, and in the Universal Law of Human Rights. Perhaps the ace in the pack of evil cards dealt to these believers is that of ‘the mark’. This is most likely to be introduced during the 3½ year triumphant reign of the world ruler i.e. during the first half of week 70. During this period, the earth is largely undisturbed from ‘acts of God’, and so the fragile technology of digital communications develops in sophistication. Such technology is fragile in the sense that it is easily disrupted by cosmic and terrestrial disturbances (so-called ‘acts of God’). Eventually, internationally linked computer control of all nations will be accomplished and normal, westernised life will be impossible without the mark. It will be impossible to buy or sell a house, or to go to a supermarket, or to have access to medical services for example (Rev 13.17). Believers will truly be outcasts of society, and have little worldly power or influence. Computer systems for the numbering and control of every individual in westernised society are already well developed.

Strengths of Midtribulationism:

- ◆ It provides a clear explanation of ‘the saints’ in Rev 13.7,10, 14.12) and of those believers in Rev 20.4: they are the persecuted church, and particularly the end-time church suffering under the beast. Thus view of the church is also held by Posttribulationists.
- ◆ It removes the church prior to the time of the wrath of God, so protecting the church (Rev 3.10).

Weaknesses of Midtribulationism:

- ◆ The vision is one of an outwardly weak church, overcome by the power of the beast and his master, Satan. Having been defeated in some form of war e.g. a mix of Antichristian law and local persecution, the saints are told to have patience and faith. But, it is difficult to see how worldwide proclamation of the gospel (Mat 24.14) could be accomplished under this scenario, since Christian institutions would be closed, and Christians themselves would lack worldly wealth. If the mark of the beast were introduced during this period, those loyal to Jesus would be socially ostracised at best, and most likely face starvation and death (see Rev 14.13).
- ◆ Similarly, Jesus implies that Christians will be working normally alongside unbelievers up to the point of the rapture (Mat 24.40.41, Lk 17.35). How can this be when it is clear they are under severe persecution?

These are strong points against Midtribulationism.

## **Epoch E – the last half of Week 70**

### ***E1 A Broken Covenant - the Tribulation of Israel (Jacob's distress)***

According to either a Pretribulationist or Midtribulationist viewpoint, the church and the restraining power of the Holy Spirit will have been removed by the middle of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. At this point the truly evil character of the beast must be apparent to all (2 Thes 2.8). Israel is perhaps the first to feel the full fury of a satanic system and its leader. The newly instituted sacrifices in the newly built temple at Jerusalem will suddenly be prohibited as the beast breaks his covenant with Israel midweek (Dan 11.31). Jesus refers to the end of this event as the 'abomination of desolation' (Mat 24.15), as this despicable, satanically inspired world leader takes his seat in God's temple (2 Thes 2.4). This is Israel's time of 'great tribulation' (Dan 12.1), a time of unprecedented trouble for those Jews who have returned to the Promised Land. The OT refers to this time as 'Jacob's distress':

*'Alas, for that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it'. (Jer 30.7)*

*'... and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgement with you face to face ... I will make you pass under the rod ...' (Ezek 20.35,37)*

The full fury of Satan against Israel results in two thirds of regathered Israel perishing, and the remainder being refined in the fire:

*'... two parts ... will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left ... and I will bring the third part through the fire ... refined as silver ...' (Zech 13.8,9)*



To reiterate, this is the same period of distress referred to in Dan 12.1 and Mat 24.15-25). Note that Mat 24.15-25 has a different context to Mat 24.1-14, which refers to the church. It refers primarily to the tribulation of regathered Israel since Judea is specifically mentioned. This view is supported by Dan 12.1, which refers to ‘the sons of your people’ i.e. exiled Jews from Judah suffering great distress. This particular distress is indeed the time of Jacob’s distress, rather than the tribulation of the church. No one (no Jew) will survive unless those days are cut short (Mat 24.22). This period lasts for ‘a time, times and half a time’ (Dan 12.7), or just 3½ years, and terminates at the end of week 70. Note that the time between the abolition of the regular sacrifice and the setting up of the abomination in the temple is about the same period of time (Dan 12.11).

### *The Sealing of the 144,000 Israelites*

As Jer 30 and Zech 13 imply, some Jews survive:

*‘For I am with you ...for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished’ (Jer 30.11).*

Throughout history God has preserved a faithful remnant of Israelites and here too God preserves a remnant for a very special purpose; they are to be special to the LORD in the millennium. Here then is the sealing of the remnant prior to the time of Jacob’s distress and the succeeding wrath of God on the earth:

*‘...Do not harm the earth ... until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God...’  
And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel ... (Rev 7.3,4)*

A common approach is to take the number 144,000 as symbolising *completeness* i.e. a number symbolising *all* God’s followers. This sees the number as 12×12×1000 symbolising the OT (denoted by the 12 tribes), the NT (symbolised by the 12 apostles), and countless believers over the centuries (symbolised by 1000). On the other hand, the link to national Israel is unmistakable, and it is this view that we follow here. These Israelites are special to the LORD, they are untarnished by the world (chaste), and in the millennium ‘they follow the Lamb wherever He goes’ (Rev 14.4).

Sealing implies protection, and one mechanism may be via God’s supernatural provision. In Rev 12.6 we read that the woman (Israel) flees to the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God. To the 144,000 Israelites who have been selected as bondservants to the LORD, the removal of the sacrifices may well be a sign to escape to the wilderness, as suggested in Table 4. The remaining Israelites then suffer ‘a great tribulation’. There, at least some Jews, a remnant, are protected supernaturally for 1260 days, corresponding to the last 3½ years of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. As indicated in Table 3, the culmination of Jacob’s trouble is Armageddon, where all the nations are gathered against Jerusalem. Even then a remnant survive.

<b>Regular sacrifice is abolished (Dan 12.11)</b>		<b>75 days</b>
<b>The 144,000 flee to the wilderness for nourishment and protection for 1260 days (Rev 12.6)</b>	<b>1290 days</b>	
<b>Climax of Israel's great tribulation: abomination of desolation set up (Dan 12.11), Israelites in Judea flee to the mountains (Mat 24.16)</b>	<b>45 days</b>	<b>1260 days</b>
<b>Israel blessed after 1335 days, (Dan 12.12). Second Coming.</b>		

Table 4 : A time-frame for Jacob's Trouble

## ***E2 Authority Removed – a Desperate World Leader***

The world ruler has full authority for only 3½ years or 42 months (Rev 13.5), after which the heavenly court sits and takes away his authority:

*'But the court will sit for judgement, and his (the Beast's) dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.'* (Dan 7.26)

As with the historic Roman Empire, the revived Roman Empire starts to disintegrate, its end being like chaff in the wind (Dan 2.35). Assuming the beast commences his world rule at the start of week 70, then disintegration commences from mid-week. Desperation sets in and Israel's covenant is broken, as discussed. Moreover, men are *forced* to worship the beast upon the threat of death (Rev 13.15). If not already played, he now plays his ace; every person on earth is *forced* to take his mark in order to buy and sell (Rev 13.16). The key Greek word in v16 is *'poieo'* meaning to *make* – people are forced to receive the mark in order to live in a 'westernised' society. Failure to do so simply results in starvation, or at best, the individual being ostracised from society. This is not a picture of world harmony, bearing in mind the turmoil and tribulation in Israel; the revived Roman Empire is in free-fall.

Despite this scenario, God still gives the nations a last chance. Taking either a pretribulation or midtribulation viewpoint, His message to the world can no longer come through the church, since it has been removed, so an angel delivers the gospel message once more:

*'Fear God, and give Him glory .... worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters'* (Rev 14.7).

Alongside the gospel, God also gives a solemn warning to the world: 'do not take the mark on the right hand or forehead' (Rev 14.9-11). God's word never returns to Him void,  
Seventieth\_Week

and so some must respond. We see them in Rev 14.12; taking a pre or mid-tribulation viewpoint, these are new saints - people who never made a decision for Christ when the church was on earth, but now, at last, they respond. These are the very last of the harvest from the Gentiles, at the very end of the age of grace. Inevitably they suffer under a desperate world system (Rev 14.13).

**E3 Seals, Trumpets and Bowls - The Wrath of God**

Our study of week 70 has taken us through the rise and fall of the final world empire, corresponding to the first and last halves of the week. The disintegration of this system is synonymous with progressively more severe judgements of the earth, as God’s wrath is finally poured out on a rebellious world.

It is important to reiterate the distinction between the tribulation of the saints, and the wrath of God. At the end of the church age God sees just two groups, believers and unbelievers, and these are separated via two reapings (Rev 14.14-20). The first is a good harvest as Christ gathers in the believers (v14-16). This can be nothing other than the rapture and the close of the tribulation period for the church, and is consistent with the removal of the church prior to the execution of God’s judgement of the earth. In other words, the church is supernaturally protected from the coming wrath of God (Rev 3.10), just as Noah was separated from a sinful world and protected from the flood. The second reaping is performed by an angel and refers to the gathering of unbelievers prior to their judgement. The culmination of this judgement is Armageddon. The clear separation of believers and unbelievers at two distinct reapings suggests Pre or Midtribulationism rather than Posttribulationism.

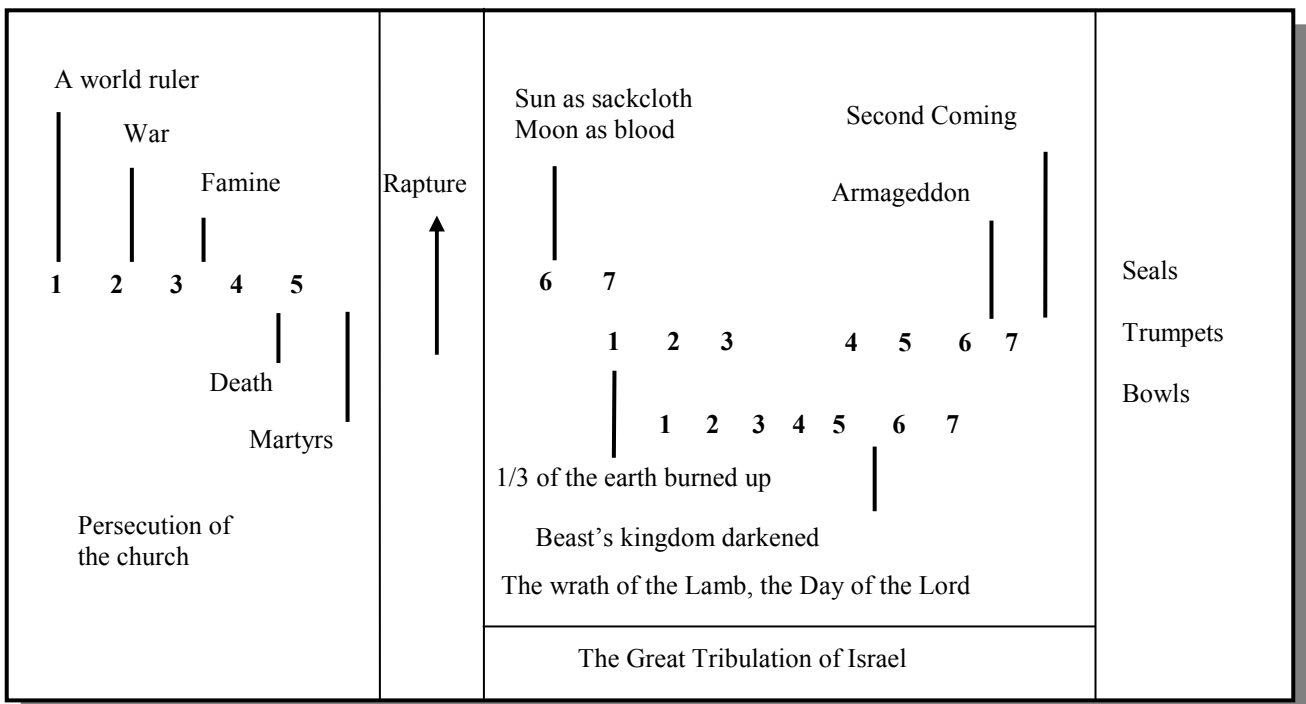


Fig. 1: A Possible Chronology for Week 70 (Midtribulation Viewpoint)

A chronological structure for the events spanning week 70 is suggested by the seals, trumpet and bowl prophecies in the book of Revelation, although the true sequencing of events is obscured given the way Revelation convolutes time epochs. A possible chronological structure based on the Midtribulation viewpoint is given in Fig.1.

The Pretribulation viewpoint sees the church removed from the earth prior to the opening of the first seal. The opening of this seal sees the emergence of the world ruler, who conquers by military might and war; ‘who is able to wage war with him’ (Rev 13.4). This results in famine and the death of one quarter of the world’s population - about 1.5 billion people (Rev 6.8). Those believers who survive then suffer severe persecution under the 3½ year reign of the world ruler, corresponding to the martyrdom of the fifth seal. The Midtribulation viewpoint then sees the church raptured before the first judgmental act of God at the opening of the sixth seal.

### *Judgement of the Earth*

The period spanned by the trumpets and bowls denotes a time of judgement of the nations, and the opening of the seventh seal seems synonymous with the start of the trumpets (Rev 8.1,2). In fact, we might align this period with ‘*the wrath of the Lamb*’ and ‘*the day of the LORD*’, as indicated in Fig.1. Note that the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon to blood *before* the day of the LORD (Joel 2.31), and so, according to Rev 6.12, this places the day of the LORD *after* the opening of the sixth seal. To ancient Israel, the day of the LORD meant the time when Yahweh would intervene by judging the world and exalting Israel in the sight of the nations:

*‘Wail, for the day of the LORD is near! ... thus I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity ...’ (Isa 13.6,11)*

Isaiah 24-27 (sometimes referred to as ‘Isaiah’s Apocalypse’) describes an earth suffering drought, extreme heat, and pollution:

*‘The LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants ... the earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they have transgressed laws ...the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left’ (Isa 24.1,5,6)*

Tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes spring to mind. Increasingly severe and extreme weather is predicted by global warming studies, and nuclear accidents could lead to widespread pollution.

At this point the beast’s kingdom starts to disintegrate, as terror is unleashed on the unbelieving earth (Rev 6.12-17), the fifth bowl of judgement delivering darkness upon the throne of the beast (Rev 16.10). The sixth bowl dries up the Euphrates river so preparing a path for a great army from the east. The nations of the world are being gathered together at Armageddon (or Har-Magedon) for ‘the war of the great day of God’ (Rev 16.14,16). The location is the plain of Meggido in northern Israel. This is the one time in history when God gathers all nations together for battle against Himself (Rev 19.19) and it will be a short and very decisive battle:

*‘For the day of the LORD draws near on all the nations. They ... will become as if they had never existed’ (Obad 15,16)*

We can take this text quite literally. At the sixth trumpet demonic angels are released from the area of the Euphrates (Iraq!) in order to entice the world again into war (Rev 9.14,15). This involves a great army from the east (Rev 9.13-19) and kills one third of the current world population. At this point in time *one half* of the world's population will have been killed ( $1/4 + 1/3 \times 3/4$ ). This great end-time war results in a decisive victory for the LORD (Zech 14.1-3), and the beast and false prophet are captured and thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 19.20,21).

#### ***E4 The Postribulation Scenario***

This viewpoint places the removal of the church near the end of week 70, just prior to the return of Christ. The church must therefore go through the triumphal but infamous 3½ year reign of the beast, with all the associated persecution (Rev 13.10, 14.12,13), followed by the 3½ year disintegration of the final world empire under God's wrath. In particular, the saints are instructed to 'come out of her' (Rev 18.4), a reference to the need to come out of an evil and corrupt world system prior to God's judgement upon it. This is consistent with the warning 'not to take the mark', even though it means that those who refuse cannot participate in a corrupt world system (Rev 14.9,10).

Strengths of Postribulationism:

- ◆ All saints are included in the rapture, no matter when they live in week 70 e.g. the saints referred to in Rev 14.12. We do not try and distinguish between the raptured church and those who turn to Christ during week 70.

Weaknesses of Postribulationism:

- ◆ Jesus implies that Christians will be working normally alongside unbelievers up to the point of the rapture (Mat 24.40,41, Lk 17.35). How can this be when, clearly, they are under severe persecution, having refused to take the mark?
- ◆ How can the man of lawlessness be revealed to the world whilst the church and Holy Spirit are still earthbound? This seems inconsistent with 2 Thes 2.7,8.
- ◆ If the church is earthbound through most of week 70, then it must experience the cataclysmic judgements on the earth as God's wrath is poured out. But God promises that His true church will not go through the 'hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world' (Rev 3.10). The church is saved from the wrath of God through Christ (Rom 5.9).

These are strong arguments against Postribulationism.

## ***E5 Christ's Second Coming***

The seventh trumpet denotes the end of earth's judgements. The beast's kingdom is annihilated and replaced by Christ's kingdom on earth:

*'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him'. (Dan 7.27)*

Recall Daniel's key prophecy:

*'Seventy weeks have been decreed .... to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (Dan 9.24)*

So at the end of week 70, Jesus returns to earth to 'bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place'. He descends to earth and His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem (Zech 14.4). Taking the literal interpretation of Ezek 40-48, the temple will have been rebuilt (see **C1**) and Jesus fills it with His glory:

*'He said to me, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever...." (Ezek 43.7)*

If any place on earth can be described as an anointed holy place, surely it is the temple at Jerusalem; the entire area ascribed to the earthly house of God is described as being 'most holy' (Ezek 43.12) and being filled with the glory of the LORD.

**See Part 2: The Millennial Reign of Christ (Epoch F)**

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Dear Reader

This article has pointed to the reality of God as His plans unfold in human history. It has demonstrated the truth of the Bible as prophecy is fulfilled before our eyes. Prophecy of a corrupt, cruel, and godless worldwide government is coming true, and prophecies concerning Israel are being fulfilled. We have seen how God is bringing this age to a rapid close, maybe in our lifetime.

Despite the momentous events soon to overtake the world, we are not alone and there is no need to fear. Jesus is close to all that call upon Him for help and forgiveness. As the Bible says:

*'God loved the world so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him will not perish, but have eternal life' (Jn 3.16)*

Don't delay - He is coming soon for His church. Call upon Jesus right now and your name will be written in the 'Book of Life'. This is your visa to the 'heavenly city'. Not everyone will enter that city:

*'and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life' (Rev 21.27)*

Ask Jesus into your life and you will be saved from the coming judgement of the nations. You will reign with Him in the millennium. You will enter with Him into the new heaven and new earth. And you will live eternally in that heavenly city.