

2018

by R. J. Adams Copyright January 2017

You will notice in the index below that there are no page numbers, This was purposely done because the page numbers differ depending on the .pdf viewer being used. So, the easiest way to find something is to scroll to the **BOLD** chapter heading titles and from there find what you seek.

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Introduction

In 1973 a Baptist Bible College student I was working alongside at a summer job gave me a copy of Hal Lindsay's book "The Late Great Planet Earth". I read it and prayed the sinners prayer at the end. The next morning when I woke up my entire world was changed. I saw everything differently. I had been a left wing radical, a member of the White Panther Party, headquartered in Ann Arbor and Detroit Mich. With no conscious thought about it I went to bed a far left liberal and woke up in the morning a different person. I was in a "Brand New World! It really did happen to me.

2 Cor 5:17 NLT This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

I had been brought up in the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod and we did not study future prophecy. I had been taught in confirmation class that all prophecy had been fulfilled and that all we were waiting for before Jesus Christ would return was for the last person that God in his foreknowledge knew would be saved to be saved.

Immediately after my conversion in 1973 I went to the Christian bookstore and bought a pocket size KJV bible and began reading it. I carried it with me almost all of the time and read through it cover to cover in about six weeks.

To my amazement there was all kinds of historically unfulfilled prophecy in the bible, contrary to what I had been taught. The war concerning Israel in Ezekiel chapter thirty eight had never happened nor could it have happened in the intervening years between the first coming of Christ and 1973 because Israel had been destroyed from being a nation about 70 AD and had just once again 25 years earlier joined the nations of the world again in 1948, just three years before I was born. It would be impossible that such a great war would not have been recorded in the history of the prior 1900 years. It could have not have happened before Christ's first coming because if it had the Jews

would have already been serving God as a nation and would have accepted Jesus as their savior.

Further proof of the presence of unfulfilled prophecy in the bible were all of the old and new testament predictions of a terrible time of worldwide wars and lawlessness happening everywhere at the same time. Indeed almost every nation in the world had at some time in their history suffered from terrible catastrophic conditions and horrible despots and dictators. But, on a worldwide scale simultaneously it has never happened. Even the most modest student of history could verify that fact.

So, I brought the problem to my Lutheran pastor and was given the same song and dance that I had been previously taught, that everything had happened long ago. There would be no sign that we could discern that would signify the nearness of Christ's return.

I knew that this had to be an error in Lutheran doctrine because Jesus himself said after the disciples had asked him for a sign that would signify his return, that which we have recorded in Luke 21:28: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

Jesus himself said there would be discernible signs concerning his second coming so how could my denomination and so many others deny that fact.

I began to read everything I could concerning end times prophecy. I bought every book on prophecy I could find at the Christian Bookstore and when that source ran out I began ordering everything I could find on the subject by mail. I even wrote to Oxford University and obtained large expensive volumes on Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and anything concerning writings of the early Church fathers. I also began attending bible studies about prophecy from any church that was having them, which was primarily Baptist and Assembly of God doctrinally slanted small groups of prophetically inclined people.

I became a proponent of the standard doctrine of those groups but I wanted more proof that they were correct. After all, my birth church was wrong on the subject so what if they were wrong too?

I bought myself a larger bible and some marking pens and decided to read through it again but this time I used red colored markers to highlight every verse of unfulfilled prophecy I came across from Genesis to Revelation. The bible I bought for this purpose also included the extra Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox books that are not in our protestant bibles today. I wanted to make sure I had every bit of prophetic material available. I read at a slower pace and more intently this time to try not to miss even one word of as yet unfulfilled prophecy. This was in 1975.

I found a few things that did not seem to line up perfectly in the standard doctrine but it concerned timing more than actual future events. I left it at that, satisfied that whenever someone spoke or taught on prophecy I had already marked the verse or verses and was familiar with them. That served me well for a few years. I was content that I had a pretty good understanding of biblical prophecy.

Then in the 1980's I bought a computer. A 286 machine with a double floppy drive, one 5 1/4 and one 3 1/2 and a printer. It cost me \$3000.00, a whole lot of money at that time. Price was no object to me because I was determined not to let anything stop me in my pursuit of biblical knowledge. The commands in Proverbs were the basis of my desire for understanding. I felt that was much more important than a new car, motorcycle or any other worldly goods. Proverbs 16:16 was a great inspiration to me.

Proverbs 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Wisdom and understanding are worth far more than gold or silver and by far the most important thing to get wisdom about is God. Since he controls our eternal destiny, where we will live and what we will be doing through trillions of years of time we would be wise to get wisdom about that above all else.

Proverbs 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

The primary reason I had spent so much on the new computer was because I had read that the bible was now available as a text file readable in DOS (This was long before Windows was invented) and that using a program called "Word-Star" one could actually copy and paste verses from the bible text document into another newly created document.

I had to have this ability because I had thought of a great project I would undertake. I would cut and paste every verse of unfulfilled prophecy into a document, (actually it took many documents because I only had 512 k of Ram) and then put the whole thing, all prophetic verses in an order that would tell the story of the end times from the bible itself without human comment. In other words the bible would tell the end times story, not a denomination, a study bible by Finis Dake or C. I. Scofield or any other human intervention.

So, I undertook the project and it took about a year to get the verses all from the text file to my newly created files. I had went through my homemade underlined prophecy study bible and located, copied and pasted every verse into a series of documents. Finally I had everything from the bible that was unfulfilled on my computer. Now for the big job.

I began to move them around so that things that would happen first (obviously the 2nd coming of Christ had to be part of the grand finale) would be placed in the order that they had to happen to avoid

conflicting with any other verse. Using the entire book of Revelation as a guide I began to place every verse from the bible pertaining to end times prophecy either before the book of Revelation, (before the seven seals) into the book of Revelation up until the return of Christ and after the return of Christ. (The millennium, heaven, the last judgment, etc.)

So, I had an order to put things into and the beautiful thing was that I could rearrange as much as necessary by just moving things around with the word processor. I failed to mention that I had already begun to undertake this project years before by using an old Underwood manual typewriter purchased for \$25.00 when a local high school had upgraded their machines to electrics. I had taken typing in high school but needless to say, every time I found an new verse to insert it necessitated retyping the whole document. After a year I only had about 12 pages completed. It had seemed at that time that I would never get this job done in less that thirty years. Oh, how the invention of home computing changed that for me.

So, It took about another year but finally in 1980's I had the document complete. My plan was that as events transpired or I learned something new that changed the order to continuously update it for the rest of my life. I had no real desire to share it with very many people because very few people seemed to be interested in the subject. Most people thought I was a crazed madman for even undertaking such a project. Even my close friends thought I was kind of wacky. They thought I had went from a left wing psychedelic drug and alcohol crazed radical to religious fanatic. Maybe they were correct. The jury is still out on that one.

But, the story does not end there. In 1988 a new church was forming in my area. I recognized the picture in the newspaper of the pastor. He had dated a girl from my high school that was one of the few Christians I knew of in high school. She had always treated everyone kindly and had even been on the homecoming queens court. He was from another high school but I had seen him around.

Intrigued because this new church was within walking distance (meeting at a K of C hall) and I was on a health kick at the time jogging up to eight miles a day, I decided to go there. It was only two miles away so I wasn't too sweaty when I got there and sometimes I drove.

I found out that a group of 12 people had decided to form this church for the purpose of doing deeper bible study than what was available at their former local church. There were actually only three adult couples, the rest were children. There was a Pathologist who worked for the State Police in Lansing Michigan, a very successful financial planner and their adult marriage study group pastor from the local Assembly of God. They felt that while the AOG did great in growth and worship, it lacked bible studies for people who wanted to dig deeper into God's Word. They did not just want one weekly small group meeting for that goal, they wanted it in every service. On Sundays, Wednesdays and in small groups they wanted to focus on understanding the Bible on all subjects, prophecy included as one of them. That was right up my alley.

After a few months of attending "New Life Christian Fellowship" the pastor asked me to meet with him and his wife for dinner at a local restaurant. He had something to discuss with me. We met and he said that many people in the church wanted to attend a study about biblical prophecy, but he himself was not all that knowledgeable on the subject nor was anyone else in the church well versed enough on the subject to teach it. He wanted me to do it. He knew prophetic studies were my hobby. I did not agree right away. I asked him to give me some time to find some proper prophetic outline material. After about three months he approached me again wanting to set a date for beginning the prophecy class. We had rotating study topics for the Sunday evening services and he wanted me to do the next one as a new quarter was approaching. I told him I had not found any type of non denominational study guide that would present more than one groups opinions on the subject. He wanted something that allowed

room for more than one view on each item, not just the Baptist, AOG, Hal Lindsay's or some other viewpoint. He wanted a comprehensive no axe to grind prophetic overview of the end times.

I told him I would have to put together my own study guide because to my knowledge no such book existed. I told him it would take me some time, to give me six months and then when the fall class started I would have the material ready. So, I began to work feverishly to put together a non denominational all inclusive study guide. One that did not just express one opinion and promote it, but gave multiple options for extremely controversial subjects such as the timing of the first resurrection, commonly called the "rapture" in prophecy study settings and books. My goal was to present prophetic study not as some weird topic best left to charlatans and fools but as a systematic study of the bible by academic standards. So then, this was the beginning of the book "Countdown to 6000." It was copyrighted for the first time 1984 but not printed for use in the church until 1988.

What I have not mentioned is that there was a groundswell of prophecy books being written at that time making date setting predictions. One such book "88 Reasons Why Christ Will Return in 1988" had the Christian world in a frenzy. It is precisely because of that fact that the congregation was imploring my pastor to have someone lead a legitimate study of end times biblical prophecy.

The frenzy was so great at that time that many Christians were thinking that they should go out and buy new homes, cars and other toys and enjoy them now because they would never have to pay for them. After a few payments and some fun Christ would return and they would leave their debts behind.

The prediction that Christ would return in 1988 was based on the words of Jesus in the two verses following.

Mark 13:30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Without getting too technical the opinion of the authors supporting the view that Jesus would return no later than 1988 was predicated on the view that Christ was speaking of the generation of people who were alive at the time of the restoration of Israel as a nation, which occurred on May 14, 1948. They believed that a generation was forty years due to the fact that Israel was said to have wandered in the wilderness after leaving Egypt for forty years and after the forty years they came into the promised land.

Acts 7:36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Israel did indeed wander in the desert for forty years and then they were allowed to go into the 'Promised Land' of Israel.

However, Jesus did not specify that his return would come after one generation which is the common opinion of the biblical meaning of the word "generation" as it pertains to life-span. He said "This generation shall not pass away" before all things are fulfilled.

I saw that error immediately upon reading what the authors of that day were promoting. They were whipping people into a frenzy with a potentially false interpretation. The intimation in the words of Jesus seemed to signify to me anyway that at least a few people who were alive in 1948 would remain alive to see his return if he was indeed referring to the return of the Jews to Israel as a starting point for the countdown. That point is by no means absolutely certain even today.

My opinion even way back then was that if anything Jesus was referring to the normal lifespan of a human given in the bible or possibly even to the longest living person at that time.

Psalms 90:10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; (seventy) and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, (eighty) yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

If anything I felt that seventy or eighty must be added to the date 1948 to come up with a more reasonable time frame. That would make it somewhere between 2018 and 2028.

However, even that formula was suspect if Jesus was referring to at least one person being left alive who was alive in 1948. At that time there was a woman in Japan who was 127 years old. Add that to 1948 and you come up with the year 2075. But I could see that even that premise was subject to change due to the advances being made in medical science. It was easily possible that by the time we reached the 2020's people could be routinely be living up to 140 years of age. Wow! what a difference that makes to the "Christ must return by 1988 or God is a liar" theory. Now we could go all the way up to 2088, one hundred years longer.

Anyway, after the big letdown in 1988 next came the Y2K in the year 2000 crowd and people making money selling more books and spouting more nonsense to deceive the sheep and line their own pockets. Notice, the authors were not giving their books away or selling them at cost to enlighten the Christian masses, no, they wanted the dollars for themselves in order to live like kings here. They themselves didn't seem to be expecting to go to heaven anytime soon, not while their focus was laying up treasures on earth.

Matthew 6:19-21 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

So, my desire was to make an outline for prophetic study that could be used by any denomination, person or group that allowed for differing opinions to be considered and respected. Remember, prophetic study is not a salvation issue anyway. It's just something for Christians to look forward to, to wish and hope for. In reality one's opinion of how it will all transpire is a moot point. In some ways the Lutherans and other denominations had it right. The main thing was to believe that someday Christ would return, implement a resurrection and judge the living and the dead and assign every person to their eternal abode.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

1 Thess 4:13-18 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 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.

This is really all we need to know about the return of Christ in a nutshell. However the study of end times prophecy is a faith builder even if we do not personally live to see the return of Christ. Seeing God's hand in guiding the world into its prophesied final condition before Christ's return helps us to have faith in all the rest of his promises in His Word, especially our salvation.

I use prophetic study personally as a means of reassuring myself during low times to strengthen my belief that God has my life in his

hands and that everything will work out just fine in the long run as long as I keep my trust in him.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

My grandmother used to say "All things work for the good, all things work for the good," in problematic times. That is not entirely true for everyone though, as the verse says if it were paraphrased in today's English, "All things work for the good to those who love God and are living in his will for their lives."

All things do not work for the good if we get drunk and total out our car by running into a tree that jumped out in front of us. On top of that we might lose an eye, suffer internal injuries and broken bones, get a drunk driving ticket and 30 days in jail to boot plus a big monetary fine. Perhaps we even lose our job and our spouse. The only way there is to be any good in that is if we decide afterwards to follow Jesus and straighten up and fly right from then on. Romans 8:28 is only true for us individually if we are living according to God's will for our lives.

The bible has to be interpreted properly or it can be made out to teach anything the leader desires. Arguments can be made for every form of bad behavior that exists if one wants to twist the scripture to reflect a certain viewpoint. Both liberals and conservatives at times try use the bible to prove their view is the correct one though they may hold to totally opposite positions. The truth seeker has only one goal in mind, to understand the bible as God meant it to be understood, not to bend it to suit our own opinions or hopes.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The point here is not to depress anyone looking and hoping for the return of Christ in their lifetime. It is so they won't be depressed if they

get old and discouraged because it has not happened. It could happen soon, but just don't bet your house on it.

Just before the year 1000 AD, in 999 AD Pope Sylvester II predicted that Christ would return the following year on January 1st 1000 AD.

That year was called in history "The Millennium Apocalypse." Various Christian clerics predicted the end of the world on this date, including Pope Sylvester II. Riots occurred in Europe and pilgrims headed east to Jerusalem. (Wikipedia)

Some people also sold all their possessions and went up into the mountains to await the return of Christ. After a few months when the food ran out they had to go back down and get jobs and try to get their lives started again. Not to mention they probably got teased by their neighbors for the rest of their lives for selling all their land and goods cheap and being deceived by false prophets. I'm not sure who the pope's informer was, maybe Tweety Bird. The pope didn't lose his job though. He had plenty of food and a nice place to live. Sylvester II was in power from April 2nd 999 to his death in 1003. Now, doesn't this prove that a pope is not infallible? We want to do is avoid being deceived by false prophets. What if a future pope says that the Antichrist is our God and Saviour? Will you believe it?

This has been a long introduction but it was necessary to clarify the position that what we should be seeking is the truth, not verification of our own long or shortly held positions. We want to understand God's Word correctly, not make it seem to say what we want to hear and believe, what makes us comfortable. In this study all we seek is the truth.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2018 Overview

Over the years I have made countless revisions to the work I entitled "Countdown to 6000." I have printed only what I have needed to teach classes in the churches. Other than that I have given it away on the internet freely for perusal by those interested in such things. As I revised it I simply uploaded the newer version to the current website. Over the past 30 years since the birth of BBS local networks and AOL chatrooms and websites I have had more than 8 million hits to view the intro to the countdown document. (Since Al Gore invented the internet. :-) Of course, many only look for a few seconds and leave but many others have downloaded, read the book and emailed me with comments. The old "Countdown" is still available though from the website below. Although I know some of the things I wrote back then are outdated and wrong it is still a good overview of end times prophecy in general. A great read for a newbie to prophecy. Just chew the meat and spit out the bones.

<http://www.rjatropical.com/>

In this new work, 2018 I am not revising the entire "Countdown" document. As I said, that is still available. It's a good starting point, a good thing to read first if one is not a long term prophecy student. In this work my goal is a little bit different. The purpose of this work is to outline the things that should begin to happen soon if the 2018 to 2088 timeline is viable. As I said earlier, none of us know for sure what God's actual timeline is. Did he really mean that someone alive in 1948 would live to see Christ's return? Well, that question will be definitively answered for anyone alive today who might live to the year 2088. Even if one does not live to see it all we should be able to watch events pushing the world toward the events described in the bible that are to occur before Christ returns.

Note: My plan is that this will be a living document, meaning that it will be updated when current events require it. Once updates begin it will be notated on the website.

Chapter 1: End Times Money

We are going to look at Bible prophecy and current events from the perspective that Jesus really did mean that we (those born in 1948 and afterwards) really are the generation of people who will live to see the return of Jesus Christ, all the while knowing in the back of our minds that even this is not a sure thing. Please view this study as Christian entertainment in a sense, not as something to start yet another false "end of the world" movement and mass Christian hysteria.

That being said by the way things are going in the world it looks today as if it really just might be the correct view. Everything seems to be lining up just as the bible says it will. We will look at a number of prophetic themes that are lead-ins to Christ's return and see how they are being set up for fulfillment in our time. Of course there is much more that can be studied about prophecy but to include it all would require thousands of pages. I want to limit this study to two hundred pages or less.

A One World Monetary System.

Revelation 13:16-17 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

If you study the verses preceding these in the bible you will see that this system will be implemented by an end times world dictator and his religious counterpart who deceive the entire world into believing that this last world leader is God in the flesh. This despot's spokesperson and prophet will be the one who actually implements the monetary system. In Christian vernacular we call these two people the Antichrist and the False Prophet. They will be the end times duo who seek to direct all worship to Satan vicariously through his proxy, the Antichrist.

For centuries Christians have expected a world leader to arise who would control all buying and selling in the world. No one knew how that could possibly be accomplished though until the invention of the computer and the internet.

Now we even have digital money, bitcoins and even newer designs. Every transaction can and must be monitored that uses these new systems. Since every transaction will be monitored then it can also easily be taxed. This will fund the end times world leaders program for peace and prosperity. The last world leader before the return of Christ will declare himself to be God and so since he says he is God we can expect him to require a tithe, ten percent from every financial transaction made in the world.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

It is not difficult to imagine at all a world in which cash is just an outmoded relic, credit cards are unnecessary and an invisible scannable chip under the skin smaller than a grain of rice (like we do with our pets) could take the place of money. We already can complete our transactions using our cell phones. A scannable mark or implant is the logical next step is to insure that our devices cannot be stolen and used to for fraudulent purposes. An easy fix is to use a scanner on a hand of in the case of a person who has no limbs to use the forehead to make transactions. If a person is alive they probably have a forehead, though they may not have hands either from birth or from war, disease or accidents. One more thing to note is the tattoo craze. What if the mark was an invisible bar code? With tattoo's being so common now no one except those crazy Christians would even make a peep about adding one more to their bodies.

Lev 19:28 NIV "Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

Lev 19:28 NLT "Do not cut your bodies for the dead, and do not mark your skin with tattoos. I am the LORD.

In ancient times tattoo's were used to remember the dead , sometimes hoping it would help the dead person with some benefit in the afterlife. Some people today still use tattoo's to remember children who died young or the short life of a loved one. God says not to do that because our bodies are his temple and defacing it with graffiti is like defacing a church with spray paint. If you already have tattoo's don't worry about it, all sin is forgivable, just don't get any more now that you know better. Don't take the "mark" either, no matter what it is, a tattoo or something else.

As I said earlier, this would eliminate a lot of criminal theft. Imagine, without cash how could drug deals be completed and money laundered? How could taxes be avoided? How could illegal aliens be paid under the table? Using your imagination you can probably think of many more ways that a worldwide cashless society would be a boon to mankind. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with the concept in itself. God himself will have a monitoring system in place and a punishment for those countries that do not pay their tithes to Jerusalem during the millennium.

Zechariah 14:17-18 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. 18And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The old testament feast of the tabernacles was the time after the fall harvest when all the people would bring ten percent of their increase to Jerusalem and present it to the priests for their support and for the sacrifices for sin that were to be made for the forgiveness of sins for the people throughout the year.

Deut 14:22-23 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. 23And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

When Christ return all nations will have to send their high governmental representative to pay their tithes to the government in Jerusalem.

Remember, the final world leader who in Christian circles we call "The Antichrist" will claim to be implementing the fulfillment of this prophecy. He will claim to be the God to whom all glory, honor, worship and tithes belong.

You may ask, why will God permit such a thing to happen? Why will he allow millions, perhaps billions of people to be deceived by an imposter, by a false messiah. The answer is that by the time this happens the gospel will have been preached in and to every nation in the world.

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Everyone who is deceived by the Antichrist will have voluntarily rejected Jesus Christ. Since they did so willingly God will permit them to be fooled by Satan's messiah impersonator.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be

revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The last world dictator will sit in the temple in Jerusalem and declare himself to be the almighty god. That is why we know that eventually the temple in Jerusalem must be rebuilt either just before or just after this man comes to power.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Mark 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

The delusion will be so strong in the end times that even the very elect, the saved, would be led astray if God through his Holy Spirit was not protecting their minds.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The world in general rejects Jesus not because they do not believe that he existed in the past but because if one admits that he was indeed the Messiah then that would involve a lifestyle change in order to follow his commands. People are more concerned with their temporary earthly happiness than with the future after death. The

people who create advertisements for all forms of media know this. Ads are geared towards having a better life now and more pleasure immediately. Begin to watch the ads with this new viewpoint and you will see this clearly. It's all about me is the premise, I want my life to be better now or as soon as I start using this new product or service. Many people reject Christ not because they don't know that the Bible is true but because they don't want to give up anything that might be pleasurable here and now. Jesus said in a parable that those whose only concern is with pleasure in this life are fools. Don't be one of them.

Luke 12:13-21 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

We don't know the day, hour or minute of our physical death, so we have to be prepared every moment to meet our maker.

Revelation of John 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they

lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

When the Antichrist comes to power in the end times the punishment for not taking his mark which will allow all of ones financial transactions to be monitored and taxed will be beheading. Failure to worship him will probably be considered treason. We already see this ancient form of punishment becoming commonplace in the Mid-East as performed by the group commonly called ISIS or ISIL.

So, now that you know what to expect is coming in the future for the financial realm you can begin to do your financial planning accordingly. Like Jesus said, lay up your treasures in heaven where they cannot be taken from you by governments and thieves. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of Jesus will earn an eternal reward for the giver.

Matt 10:42 ESV And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Those who take the mark will receive their reward also, the reward of eternal punishment. You may think that this is not fair or is cruel and unusual punishment but we don't make the rules, we just have to play by them. God created us and he can do with his creatures whatsoever he desires. Those who take the Antichrist's mark will suffer God's wrath as described in the verse below.

Revelation of John 14:10-11 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Revelation of John 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and

honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Again, God created everything for his own pleasure and he can do with his own creation whatsoever He will. We have no say so in the matter. It's easier to fight city hall than to enter into a dispute with our Creator.

Chapter 2: The Two Messiahs

As we study prophecy we must not be arrogant by thinking that we are so much smarter than the Jewish rabbi's and the people who lived at the time of the first coming of Christ that we would have understood everything. We must not think that we have everything all figured out now about the end times as we may find out that God has many surprises in store for us up his proverbial sleeve.

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It is understandable for us today to see how the Jews became so confused about prophecy that they thought that their would be two separate personages that would fulfill the roles of their redeemer and king.

Because some old testament prophets portrayed the Messiah as a suffering servant and some as a conquering king they came up with a prophetic scenario that would allow for this without too much contradiction.

What they came up with is that there would be two Messiah's. The first one, Messiah ben (son of) Joseph would fulfill all of the prophecies concerning a suffering servant. The second Messiah would fulfill all of the prophecies concerning a conquering king who would free Israel from gentile servitude.

They had their prophecies correct in a way but who could have predicted at that time that they would be one and the same person? No one, and that is why no one had it right. How could they have known that Jesus would come and fulfill the prophecies about messiah ben Joseph and suffer and die for the sins of all mankind, be buried, rise from the dead, ascend into heaven and would later return

after thousands of years to fulfill the prophecies concerning messiah ben David? How could they have even ventured to guess that one person could fulfill both sets of prophecies? It was impossible for them to know that unless the Holy Spirit had opened their minds to understand, and he did not do that.

Not even Satan and his demons knew how God's plan would unfold. Satan himself was shocked when things worked out as they did. He thought he had thwarted God's plans for human redemption by inciting the Jews and the Romans to crucify Jesus when all along that was God's plan for our salvation. Remember, Satan also tried to kill Jesus at his birth when he caused Herod to fear that Jesus would take away the kingship from him and his family. Satan from the time of Jesus' birth thought that the way to stop God's plan was to kill the Messiah.

1 Cor 2:5-9 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 6Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

God did not reveal his plan to mankind for if He had Satan and his princes would have known about it too. God kept it secret from all until after it was over and all of mankind's sin was paid for. Only then after the redemptive process was complete did Jesus reveal to his disciples what had happened. God may not have revealed his full plan for the end times to us either for the same reason. Satan may still believe he can win.

Luke 24:13- 35 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore

furlongs. 14And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. 22Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? 33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 4Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared

to Simon. 35And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Let's be careful when studying the bible to make sure we have it right. If we don't understand something just pray about it and wait. Eventually we will understand everything.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

1 Cor 13:12 NIV For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

In ancient times a mirror could be a polished piece of copper or some other material, not almost perfect reflections like we have today. At that time what they saw was like seeing your face reflected on the hood of your car which you have just finished waxing. That is what "seeing in a glass darkly" means.

Chapter 3: The Regathering of Israel

In the biblical book of Ezekiel we are told of the regathering of scattered Israelites from around the world to their ancient God given homeland the territory of Israel. The regathering of Israel to their ancient homeland is an absolute necessity for much of unfulfilled biblical prophecy to be completed because in order for prophecies concerning Israel to happen there has to be an Israel.

This is also why the unsaved world fights so hard against Israel today. Satan fills the hearts of unredeemed people to do his will. his desire is to make God a liar by succeeding in causing even one of God's prophetic utterances to fail. By doing so he would seem to have proven himself to be greater than the true God. Eventually all the nations of the world will turn against Israel, the United States included.

Zechariah 12:3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

The intimation here is that it is not just a possibility that all nations will be against Israel but that they actually will be against her or if not actually against her then too weak to do anything about the attack that will commence. Notice also that the focal point of this coalition of nations will be the city of Jerusalem. For thousands of years Jerusalem was just a quaint tourist destination with no real involvement in world affairs. Now we can read or hear about it regularly in our newspapers or television or internet news. Just as the bible predicted, Jerusalem will be a catalyst for end times events. It is almost undeniable proof that the bible is true. God doesn't give us absolute proof yet of his existence and power, in this era there is still something that has to be accepted by faith.

Recently our newly elected president Donald Trump has said that he will recognize Jerusalem as the capitol city of Israel rather than Tel

Aviv. Whether he is able to do so or not still proves the point that Jerusalem is in the forefront of the news right now. What a tumult there will be among the nations who hate Israel if this actually comes to pass. Just more proof that the God of the bible is the true God.

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

God created the heavens and the earth and he has the right to give any portion of it to whomsoever he will. Of course Satan, the United Nations, the Palestinians and other Mid-East countries have other opinions. This is normal. God punished Israel for their sins by removing them from their homeland for 2000 years. This removal and restoration is prophesied in the book of Hosea. It is a little bit cryptic but understandable nonetheless.

Hosea 5:14-15 For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him. 15 I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

After his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus returned to his place, at the right hand of God the Father in heaven.

Mark 16:19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Hosea 6:1-2 Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Psalms 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The cryptic message here is that the punishment of the Jews for rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah will be two days or in prophetic terms two thousand years of banishment from the land of Israel. After that the Lord will regather them to their home, which is still happening today. Then on the third day they will live in his sight during the one thousand year millennium.

Hosea 1:9-10 Then said God, Call his name Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. 10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

Now, where was it said to Israel that they were not God's people? In Israel of course as Hosea the prophet declared to them while they were yet living there. So, Where will they be restored to and later after the return of Christ be called the sons of the living God? Once again in the land of Israel of course. Now you can understand why Satan and the world hate Israel, it is because the nation of Israel is the absolute proof that God exists and that He is the God of the Bible to whom someday every knee will bow. (In worship)

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Romans 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Satan and unbelievers do not wish to ever bend their knee to God and worship him. It would be like a democrat praising Donald Trump after

the most recent election, only a thousand times worse for them. Since we are all going to have to worship God someday why not do it now voluntarily and get it out of the way rather than wait and do it forcibly just before being cast into the Lake of Fire? Like the old saying says, "If you can't beat em, join em." Worship God today and you won't fear doing it after your resurrection.

Now here is kind of an example of what has happened with Israel. Lets imagine that someone was to leave their home unwillingly by force due to war, let's say in the United States for only ten percent of the amount of time (200 years) that Israel has been scattered due to the wars of Roman Empire, what would happen? Well, in most cases eventually the government would confiscate the land due to non payment of taxes and sell it to someone else. It happens all the time. Now, if the heirs of the person whose land was sold or given away should seek to get the land back two hundred years later what would be the outcome? They would probably lose their case in court. The government would say that the land was abandoned and legally sold and that the current owners are the rightful owners. That is how this world looks at things, but the God of the bible looks at it differently.

God commanded the Israelites never to sell their land but that it was to be theirs for as long as this present heaven and earth remain. Even though He (God) himself arranged for their temporary departure because of their sins, in His eyes they still have deed and title to the land through Him. This may infuriate those who squatted on it in their absence but it is a simple fact. God booted Israel out almost 2000 years ago and now he is letting them back in. His world, His choice.

Deut 32:8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

Isn't that amazing? God set the boundaries of all the nations of the world according to his foreknowledge how many descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be born in the future. The

boundaries of the nations are fixed in accordance with God's plan. Of course at times God permits one nation to conquer another for a time (usually for punishment) but eventually they once again return to their previous estate. Empires stretch when they are at their apex of power but then retract when their wealth diminishes. Look at the Greek empire, the Roman empire, the British empire, the Russian empire and more recently the American empire. We are beginning the shrinking process here in the U.S. today. We no longer have the financial resources to be the world's policeman. Our sphere of influence is waning. God is now in the process of returning Israel to power, slowly and gradually. Today in 2016 about 50% of world Jewry has been regathered to Israel. Remember, the Jews only comprise two of the 12 tribes. There are a whole lot more people to return to Israel besides the Jews. God promised that the tribe of Judah (the Jews) would return first and then the rest of the tribes.

Zechariah 12:7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

Judah (the Jews) was the tribe from which Christ's human body was descended so they get the honor of going back to Israel first and with them the tribe of Benjamin who was their ally in times past. Just think how angry the world will be when the other ten tribes start going back. Israel is going to be the greatest, wealthiest most powerful nation in the world someday, but not until after the return of Christ.

There are different opinions as to whether the prophecies in Ezekiel chapters thirty seven through thirty nine will occur before, during or after the Great Tribulation. During the course of this study we will look at these prophecies with the view that the war described in chapters thirty eight and thirty nine will begin to be fulfilled before Antichrist comes to power and that this war will make it possible for the Jews to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Now this is not the only possibility for the timing of this war but we have to place it somewhere in this prophetic study so before the prophecies of Revelation begin to be

fulfilled is as good a place as any until we have further information from current events.

Israel's Regathering from the Nations

The first event predicted in Ezekiel chapter thirty seven is the regathering of the Jews and the Israelites who have been scattered over the face of the whole Earth. The prophecies below concern both the resurrection of the dead and the return of the Israelites to their own land.

Ezekiel 37:1 & 14 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'

In the ancient past, before the first coming of Christ, the Israelites had been divided into two nations, (God split the kingdom under Solomon's son Rehoboam) and they fought wars with each other. The northern nation was called Israel, and the southern nation was called Judah. The northern nation was punished by God for worshipping idols and God permitted the king of Assyria to take them into captivity carry them away to northern regions of the Assyrian empire. From there the Israelites migrated throughout the world. Their captivity began in 721 BC and they have never returned to the land of Israel.

The southern kingdom, called Judah, also sinned against the Lord, and he (the Lord) caused the king of Babylon to take them into captivity and carry them to Babylon. This occurred in 586 BC. It was in Babylon that the book of the prophet Daniel was written. After seventy years God caused the king of the Persians, Cyrus, to issue a decree permitting the Jews living in Babylon to return to their own land. They did so, and their descendants were those Jews who were living in Israel during the time of the first coming of Christ.

In seventy AD, about thirty five years after Christ was crucified, the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and drove the Jews out of the land that God had given them. God scattered the Jews throughout the world because of their sins. They remained scattered without a country to come home to until 1948 when the state of Israel was reborn.

Ezekiel 37:15-28 The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, 'Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.' Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, 'Ephraim's stick, belonging to Joseph and all the house of Israel associated with him.' Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand. "When your countrymen ask you, 'Won't you tell us what you mean by this?' say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph-- which is in Ephraim's hand--and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick, making them a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.' Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will

be their God. "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever."

Jeremiah 16:14-15 "However, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when men will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.

Once again, the current existence of the country of Israel today, against all odds is one of the greatest proofs of the truth of the bible.

The nation of Israel today is a nation that has survived and recovered from four wars. In each war they were vastly outnumbered and from a human viewpoint, they should have been defeated each time, but instead God gave them victory and increased their territory. Although they have recovered from four wars so far, there are at least three more in their future. The war described in Ezekiel, the battle of Armageddon, and the war at the end of the Millennium. We will only concern ourselves at this time with the next biblically prophesied war on God's timetable, the war described in Ezekiel.

Gog is the symbolic name of the leader of the end times coalition that will attack Israel and be defeated by a miracle from God.

Genesis 10:1-5 Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah,

Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood. 2The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. 3And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. 4And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.^a 5By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Magog was the name of one of the children of the son of Noah, Japheth. Just as Israel is called by the name of their ancestor so too we can identify the territory of Magog and Tubal as being the land north of Israel where the sons of Magog and Tubal settled being the countries of Turkey, the "Stans" and Russia. Note that other nations will join them also as stated in the verses below.

Ezekiel 38:1-9 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him,^a 3And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 4And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: 5Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: 6Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. 7Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. 8After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. 9Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee.

Ezekiel 38:14-16 Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? 15And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: 16And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.

Notice that this army is commanded by leaders from the north of Israel. The countries directly north of Israel are Syria, Turkey and Russia. However, many other countries from the surrounding areas will join in with this great force. The leaders though will be mostly from the north, probably Turkey and Russia and possibly Persia (Iran) from the east of Israel.

Ezekiel 38:17-23 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou (or You are) he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? 18And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. 19For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; 20So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.^h 21And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every man's sword shall be against his brother. 22And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many

nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39:1-8 Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 2And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: 3And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. 4Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. 6And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD. 7So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 8 Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord GOD; this is the day whereof I have spoken.

Notice that God sets up this war for the purpose of letting both Israel and the rest of the world know that he is the true God of the universe. This is one of the reasons I believe that this war occurs before the events described in Revelation. I think that this is one of mankind's last opportunities to repent before the strong delusion comes upon the world that will deceive so many. Those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ after seeing this great army destroyed have no one to blame but themselves for being willingly blind to the truth and rejecting the true God and accepting the Antichrist and his mark.

Ezekiel 38:9-10 And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: 10So that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil

those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord GOD.

Israel will burn the weapons of war for seven years after the battle. This is another indicator that this battle will occur before the tribulation period and most likely before the first resurrection. (rapture) If the battle occurred during the tribulation period then Israel would be burning smoky and dangerous weapons after the return of Christ, which will not be necessary after he renews the earth for the millennium.

Ezekiel 38:21-29 And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. 22So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward. 23And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword.

Notice that from the day of their rescue and forward Israel will know who their God is. When will the Jews be saved? After this war many will begin to understand that they crucified their Lord on Calvary.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

From this day and forward many Jews and Israelites will recognize the one they pierced, Jesus, as their saviour.

Ezekiel chapter forty tells about the rebuilding of the temple after this war. This temple is built by human hands and will be desecrated by the Antichrist. This is not the temple Christ will use after his return. He

will build his own temple.

Mark 14:58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

At his coming he will destroy the temple that Antichrist has desecrated and build his own temple for use during the millennium. Jesus needs only to speak the words and the new temple will appear, or he could summon his angels to build it so that it will not be constructed by human hands. Whatever the case a new temple will be constructed in three days after Christ returns. This temple will be used for one thousand years. In heaven there will be no need of a temple because God is there.

Revelation 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Update: On December 23rd of 2016 Barak Obama became the first president in the history of the U.S. to fail to stand with Israel in a U.N. vote meant to force Israel to give up part of the territory that God has allocated to them including Jerusalem. For years people have told me that the U.S. would never desert Israel and now it has happened. This brings us just that much closer to ALL of the nations of the world being united against Israel before the war described in Ezekiel occurs.

Those countries who voted against Israel are: Britain, France, Russia, China, Japan, Ukraine, Angola, Egypt, Uruguay, Spain, Senegal and New Zealand. The U.S. abstained from voting, letting the resolution stand.

Psalms 135:21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

Isaiah 31:5 As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend

Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

See news story below.

23 DECEMBER 2016 • 9:21 PM Nick Allen, Washington

President Barack Obama has been accused of “shamefully abandoning” Israel after refusing to block a United Nations resolution demanding an end to the building of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

In one of the final acts of his presidency, the US abstained from a UN Security Council vote, refusing to use its veto and undermining its relationship with one of its historic allies.

The move was seen as a parting shot by Mr Obama, who also signed the controversial Iranian nuclear deal, after years of acrimonious relations with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister.

There are more than 150 settlements across the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in areas Israel captured in 1967. Israel disputes the settlements are illegal and says their status should be determined in talks on Palestinian statehood.

Mr Obama was condemned by senior US politicians across the spectrum. Paul Ryan, the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, called the decision to abstain “absolutely shameful”. Senator John McCain, the former Republican presidential nominee, said it had “made us complicit in this outrageous attack” on Israel.

Donald J. Trump: As to the U.N., things will be different after Jan. 20th. 3:14 PM - 23 Dec 2016

My Comments on this development. 12/28/16

So, President Obama just gave Jerusalem to the Philistines*. Now the nations of the world can attack Israel without US interference unless Trump can overturn it. He may not be able to overturn it if there are just 3 or 4 republican senators that vote with the democrats.

However, it makes 2017 an exciting year. The Ezekiel war most likely will happen before the trib (and probably before the rapture) because it says that Israel will burn the weapons of war for seven years. If the trib is 7 years long it has to happen with enough time to fulfill that prophecy because burning junk won't be necessary after Christ returns and cleans up the earth with His power. So, basically, the Ezekiel war is the last thing stopping the rapture from taking place.

So, unless Trump can overturn Obama's giving Jerusalem away the nations of the world can attack at any time, hopefully not while I am there:) (I will be in Israel with Hillsong in April of 2017)

New Living Translation Isa 31:4 The LORD of Heaven's Armies will hover over Jerusalem and protect it like a bird protecting its nest. He will defend and save the city; he will pass over it and rescue it."

I'm not sure what bird's have to do with it but the Lord will protect Jerusalem in the end times, not the eagle of the US as some have said. We could have a big disaster here in the US because of what the president did, like an earthquake or a natural disaster. Hopefully the Lord will have mercy on us because we (the general population) didn't vote on it.

*Note: According to ancient Jewish documents (Jubilees) Caananites from Libya unlawfully migrated to the Land reserved and promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (later called Israel) The land became known as Canaan and later Palestine, but God called it Israel and Judah. The Philistines as the usurper were called in biblical times have now intermarried with many other ethnic groups and are called Palestinians. Yes, the Palestinians do need a homeland but it needs to be in the country where the first illegal immigrants came from to the

land God the creator had reserved as HIS capitol country (Israel) and city. (Jerusalem) The Palestinians and all other non Israeli's need a homeland in Libya. This would solve the problems of today in the Mid-East. Unfortunately it will not happen until after the return of Christ. There will continue to be strife in Israel until Jesus comes again and straightens everything out.

Chapter 4: The First Resurrection (We May All be Wrong)

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

No one knows the day and hour of either the first resurrection (the rapture) or of the physical return of Christ to the mount of olives. I will present here seven different opinions of when the first resurrection may occur, but be forewarned, they may all be wrong.

God has reserved this knowledge to himself and even Jesus did not know it when he was housed in a human body. Many presumptuous people today claim to know when these things will happen, and in what order. Apparently they are now smarter than Jesus was when he walked the earth. That being said there is nothing wrong with studying the subject. We are ordered by Christ to be looking for his coming. Just because we do not know the day or the hour we can know the season.

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

With all that being said belief in the future resurrection of the dead is an essential part of being a Christian. If there is no resurrection what are we being saved from? If we all face eternal non existence after death, why bother studying religion at all, and that includes all religions? If there is no resurrection then that means there is no future judgment so why shouldn't we just eat, drink and be merry and enjoy our short time on earth to the fullest? Even the bible says the same thing.

*1 Cor 15:12-20 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
13But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
14And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith*

is also vain. 15Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. 16For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: 17And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. 18Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. 19If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 20But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

If there is no resurrection then Christians are the stupidest and most miserable lot of people in the world. They forgo fun in the here and now and have nothing to look forward to in the future except the eternal blackness and non existence of death.

So, to be a true Christian requires a belief that there is a benefit to it, that one will escape eternal punishment and enjoy eternal life. Without this tenet Christianity and all religions are simply nonsense except for the benefit of being in a social club to celebrate special occasions like births, marriages and to hold funerals for those who have passed away. Churches would be of no more value than a lodge membership.

So, we as Christians are to believe that there will be a resurrection and a judgement and of course being humans with natural curiosity built into our psyche by God Himself, we wonder when it will happen.

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

Mark 4:22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.

We may not all be earthly kings but we all wonder about the future and especially our own future. This is fine as long as we do not assume to have the total answer to this question as some have done in the past and still do today.

How much shame and dishonor has been brought to the church of Jesus Christ down through the centuries by false prophets proclaiming that Christ would return at such and such a time. We have looked like fools in the eyes of the world due to people spouting such nonsense, claiming to have analyzed the scriptures and found secret information revealing that day. If some of those who have done this are Christians at all I would not want to be in their shoes when they stand at the judgment. Even if they are saved how embarrassing will it be to stand before the master and be revealed as a complete idiot when it came to understanding scriptures? Well, it would be better than going to hell, but there will be some awful red faces when these folks stand before the Lord.

With that said we will commence to present seven common opinions of when the "rapture" will take place. (Note: rapture is a word used by many christians to denote the time when the righteous dead are raised, it is called "the first resurrection" in the scriptures)

The Throne Room of Heaven

Revelation 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

Most pre-tribulationists (those who believe that the rapture occurs before the tribulation begins) believe that the rapture takes place here, and is marked by the words to John "Come up here" or as it is translated in the KJV "Come up Hither." The justification for this is that John is being told what must happen after the Church age has been completed as was outlined by the descriptions of the seven churches. Another convincing argument for this time period is that in the very next chapter the Antichrist is revealed. Most pre-tribulationists believe that no one saved during or before the "church age" will be on earth to see the Antichrist revealed.

In chapter 11 of Revelation the words "Come up Hither" are used again and those words command the dead two witnesses to rise up and ascend to heaven.

While we are on the subject of the rapture we may as well differentiate between the rapture and the second coming of Christ. The rapture refers to that time when the Lord will call his saints up to meet him in the air. The dead will rise first, presumably all the way back to the first to die, Abel, followed by the living going up to meet Christ. The second coming of Christ to earth follows after the tribulation period described in revelation.

The Rapture Described in the Bible

1Thessalonians 4:13- 18 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. 14For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 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. 16 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: 17 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. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Various Views Concerning the Timing of the Rapture and the Word "Tribulation"

Some may not have studied prophecy to any great degree and to avoid confusion we will explain the various views concerning the timing of the rapture, the catching away of the church to heaven to forever be with the Lord. Understanding prophetic terminology is a key to understanding prophecy. The first word we need to look at is the

word "Tribulation."

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Daniel 12:1 ...and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Jer 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

The term tribulation as it refers to future biblical prophecy refers to that time that Jesus, Jeremiah and Daniel prophesied would be the most horrible time on earth that has ever existed. It is also called the time of "Jacob's Trouble" and the "Great Tribulation." The word tribulation is often used in the bible to mean a time of trouble, but in reference to the end times it is a specific time of the outpouring of the wrath of God on an evil world. It is basically the time of the fulfillment of the judgments written in the book of Revelation upon the world. Next we will look at where various groups believe the rapture will take place in relation to the tribulation period.

The Pre-Pre Tribulation Rapture: This view believes that the rapture may occur anytime now, not waiting for the fourth chapter of Revelation to begin being fulfilled, meaning that the church does not have to fall into apostasy before it takes place. (Apostasy: The abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief.) This is the only opinion that allows for the rapture to potentially be immediately imminent. (Happen at any moment) This includes those who believe the rapture will take place before the as yet unfulfilled war described in Ezekiel.

The Pre-Tribulation Rapture: Pre-Tribulationists for the most part believe that the Church will be caught up to heaven at the "Come up

Hither” in Revelation chapter four. Pre-Tribulationist's (Most Baptists and Pentecostals) believe that the entire book of Revelation from chapter four onward is the “Wrath of God” or the “Hour of Temptation” that the church has been promised protection from. They also believe that the tribulation will last for seven years. Some believe that there are some things that may be fulfilled yet before the rapture, but nothing after chapter four of Revelation.

1 Thess 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rev 3:10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, (trial / testing) which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

The Mid-Tribulation Rapture: Mid-Tribulationists believe that the church will go through the first half of a seven year tribulation. They do not believe that the first 3 1/2 years are the “Wrath of God or “the hour of temptation”. The seven seals are deemed to be the persecution of the church by Satan through his Antichrist which we are not promised to be protected from. The trumpet judgments are mankind's last opportunity to repent, probably implemented and supported by the testimony of the two witnesses. The trumpets are viewed as an act of mercy from God, the last chance for salvation before the tribulation, not his wrath. Mid-Tribulationists believe that the church will be spared from everything after the seven trumpets and that the rapture will take place 3 1/2 years after the first seal is opened. (Note: Under this scenario the “Two Witnesses” and the Church would all go up together in the “first resurrection.”

Pre Wrath Rapture: Pre wrath is almost identical to mid-trib except that the tribulation is divided into three equal parts of about 2 years and four months each, not two 3 1/2 year periods. (Both total seven years) 1/3 for the Seals, 1/3 for the trumpets and 1/3 for the bowls or vials of wrath. The rapture would take place about four years and 8 months after the seven seals begin and the church would escape the

earth before God's bowls of wrath are poured out on the earth. Some pre wrath folks think that Christians will go through six years of the trib and be raptured at the beginning of the seventh year to celebrate the "marriage supper of the Lamb." This view is based on a scripture in the old testamant law that says a newly married man must not go out to war until at least one year after He has married his bride. Jesus said that he must fulfill every jot and tittle of the scriptures so he must wait for at least one year after the rapture to return. However, nothing says that he cannot wait longer, like 3 1/2 or 7 years.

Deut 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

I'm not sure why a man has to cheer up his wife after he has married her, is she depressed? Just kidding. What it means is that in human life a man may die in war and the wife will have at least had one year to enjoy being married and to perhaps become pregnant to produce a child to carry on her husband's name and to produce an heir to receive his property in Israel. While there is no danger of Christ dying at Armageddon he must fulfill every word of the scriptures.

Matthew 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

A 3 1/2 Year Tribulation: Some believe that all of the references to a 3 1/2 year period are one and the same, in other words there are not two halves to the tribulation. All of the judgments of Revelation will take place during one 3 1/2 year period. Most 3 1/2 year proponents believe that Jesus' first coming fulfilled 1/2 (3 1/2 years) of the seventieth week of Daniel, leaving only 3 1/2 years to finish everything else. In other words the church would escape the entire tribulation from Revelation chapter four onward, but Christ would return with his Church 3 1/2 years after the rapture, not seven. All of Revelation's

prophecies would be fulfilled in one 3 1/2 year time frame.

Post Trib Rapture: Some denominational churches believe that Christ will raise the dead on his way down from heaven to Armageddon so that the church can come down with him. Many who hold to this belief do not take Revelation and end times prophecy literally but that everything about the end times in the bible is only allegorical and concerns the constant battle between good and evil, God and Satan, with God being the ultimate winner. This view is no longer very common as many of it's proponents also believed the world would get better and better as the world was "Christianized" and then Christ would return. It didn't happen. Sin in the world is getting worse and worse, making parts of this belief untenable and casting doubt on the rest of it. (Note: St. Augustine in the 4th century was a proponent of this position)

No Rapture: Some believe that there will be no rapture whatsoever until after the return of Christ. Then he will raise the saved and 1000 years later raise the unbelievers at the last (Great White Throne) judgment. There are even some who believe that there are not two resurrections but only one. They believe that Christ will return, raise all of the dead, have the angels sort everyone out, send the lost to hell and take the saints to heaven to live happily ever after. End of story. That is what I was taught when I was a youth. It's plenty for salvation but not very good for biblical comprehension.

Natural Death as an Escape from Tribulation: Now, here is an eighth view that most of you have probably never heard of. Ancient Jewish Rabbis believed that a verse in Isaiah taught that no believers died in the flood. They believed that God caused every righteous person to die of apparently natural deaths before the flood with the exception of the eight people who would go into the ark for protection. Some think that this could happen again before the tribulation begins. No righteous person would have suffered God's wrath in the flood and no righteous person would suffer his wrath during the tribulation, the righteous would all have died of seemingly natural causes or

accidents. The 144,000 would be comparable to Noah and his family. They would be sealed and protected during God's judgment and live on into the millennium. They are all virgins (half men and half women) and would then marry and repopulate all the nations of the earth. All believers would die a normal earthly death before the tribulation started and the world would never even notice that the Church was gone. The people of the world would be totally unsaved and evil except for those sealed to live through the tribulation, like Noah and his family lived through the flood. Now that's different isn't it?

Isaiah 57:1 -2 The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. 2He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

2 Kings 22:20 Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place."

The apocryphal book of Jasher also states that this happened before the flood.

Jasher 4:20-21 And all men who walked in the ways of the Lord, died in those days, before the Lord brought the evil upon man which he had declared, for this was from the Lord, that they should not see the evil which the Lord spoke of concerning the sons of men. 21 And Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord chose him and his children to raise up seed from them upon the face of the whole earth.

Is this scenario likely? No, but it does show one thing correctly and that is that there is more than one way God could fulfill his word without contradiction. In this case the church would escape the entire tribulation, (except for those people chosen to become martyrs at the hands of Antichrist) the saved would be raised with the two witnesses at the first resurrection and celebrate the Marriage Supper of the

Lamb in heaven while the wrath of God is being poured out on earth and then return with Christ at his physical coming. Am I promoting this possibility? Of course not. It is simply an exercise in showing that there is more than one way God can fulfill his prophecies besides those opinions formulated by prophecy students in the 1850's. Clarence Larkin's chart is not necessarily one hundred percent correct.

These are just some of the opinions that exist concerning the rapture. There are many more but these are the most well known except for the last one. I have presented them so that as you read prophecy books, watch prophecy preachers on TV and follow end times events in general you will not become confused by the various opinions and terminology.

You might ask "what is your opinion?" My opinion is to know what the word says and to watch events unfold as long as I am alive. I'm sure God will have some surprises for us in the end times just as he did at his first coming. The late David Wilkerson was quoted as saying "I believe in "Pan-Trib," it will all pan out in the end. I really don't think any of us have it all figured out perfectly yet.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

That (Pan-Trib) is probably a good opinion to hold to. There is no doubt that God will work things out for the best for his people regardless of the logistics of the fulfillments of end times prophecy.

Matthew 24:42-43 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.
(into)

Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Notice again that Jesus commands his followers to watch for the signs of his coming even though we cannot know the answer to the question of when it will happen perfectly. We will be rewarded for doing what he says, watching. Our rewards will last forever.

Dan 12:3 NIV Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Chapter 5: Why We Might be Close to the 2nd Coming

This chapter may seem as if it belongs at the beginning of this book and in some ways I agree. If all readers were familiar with prophetic vocabulary that is where I would have placed it. Since Some may be new to the study of prophecy I thought it better to wait until there was an opportunity for readers to become familiar with terminology that is new to them. Now that we have covered the various views of the rapture and it's associated terminology we will take a look at some other prophetic numerology.

Amos 3:7 "Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets."

Romans 3:4 KJV God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written,...

Titus 1:2 KJV In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

God, since the creation of Adam, has sent his servants the prophets to reveal his future plans to those who were willing to listen. Before the flood God sent Noah to preach to the people that a great flood would come upon the Earth. After the flood God chose Abraham and his descendants to be his oracle people. For two thousand years God sent his prophets to Abraham's descendants, and the writings of these prophets are preserved for us in the Old Testament of the bible.

2 Peter 1:20-21 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 44:6-8 "This is what the Lord says--Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." "Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.

Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come--yes, let him foretell what will come." "Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

Isaiah 48:5 "Therefore, I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, My idols did them; my wooden image and metal God ordained them."

God, in the bible has declared himself to be the only God, the first and the last. He goes on to say that he is the God, the only God, who can foretell the future with 100% accuracy. Many of His prophecies particularly concern his ancient people, the nation of Israel.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken."

The test of an Old Testament prophet was that some of what he had spoken in the name of the Lord had to come true during the lifetime of the people he was speaking to, except for those things that were specifically stated to be prophecies for the distant future. If a prophets words did not come true, his writings were not included in the bible. This is why some denominations teach that all prophecy except for the return of Christ has already been fulfilled. Almost all biblical prophecy has had a partial or minor fulfillment shortly after it was given, with the major fulfillment coming hundreds or even thousands of years later. God has promised that he will reveal new things to those who are alert and willing to receive them.

Isaiah 48:6-7 "You have heard these things; look at them all. Will you not admit them? From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you. They are created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today."

Also, notice in the next verse that God not only knows what is going to happen in the future, but he knows who it is going to happen to. He knows people, not just before they are born, but before they are even conceived.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

The proof that the God of the bible is the most powerful being in the universe is as close as your morning newspaper or media outlet once you know and understand what God says he will accomplish as we draw nearer to the second coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

God, the architect of the universe can predict everything that is going to happen because he planned it all aeons ago.

Countdown To 6000

It is indicated in the bible that the history of the descendants of Adam living on the Earth will last for six thousand years, followed by 1000 years of peace under the rule of Jesus Christ. Through the calculation of the ages of the biblical patriarch's we can determine that there were 2000 years from the creation of Adam to the call of Abraham, and 2000 years from the call of Abraham until the time that Jesus began his ministry. This indicates that there will be another period of 2000 years from the time of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus until his second coming. The sum of the three 2000 year time periods will be 6000 years. As we approached the year 2000 on our calendar many

preachers and prophecy students were teaching that the 6000 years were almost finished and that Christ would return on or before the year 2000. They overlooked the fact that our calendar is in error by about 30 years because it was set back to zero (by the Roman Catholic Church) on the year that Christ was born, rather than on the year that he began his ministry.

The authors of "The Chronological Bibles" research team has concluded that the first 4000 years of history were not completed until the day Christ was baptized in the Jordan river by John the Baptist. The scriptures state that Jesus was about thirty years old at this time.

Adam seems to have been created a mature man of about 30 years of age rather than a baby in a cradle. When Christ became 30 years old the 4000 year cycle seems to have been completed. Thirty year old created Adam to thirty year old Jesus seems to have accomplished the first 4000 years of human history.

Luke 3:21-23 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,

According to their research the first 4000 years were not completed until the moment that Christ was baptized by John at thirty years of age. If Christ was born in 4 BC, (as many scholars believe) then the 6000 years will not be completed until about 2026. The year 2000 on our calendar was really only about the year 1970. When the year 2000 arrived we had only had achieved about 5,970 years of human history, not 6000, if this theory is correct. In the year 2000 we will still had at least about 26 to 30 more years before the 6000 years would be completed.

In addition to that our calendar has been changed many times down through the centuries. To be on the safe side we need to at least allow for a seven years later fudge factor to cover any errors. This gives us a time period between 2023 and 2037. As we said earlier in this study it would not be surprising if the world went on as normal until 2088 based on the restoration of Israel. However what we are looking at here are other signs besides Israel to see if we can shed a little more light on the subject. Other signs we look at signify a time earlier than 2088, most of them between 2026 and 2034.

The apocryphal book of Jubilees also states that one day in heaven is like a thousand years. (Jubilees is an ancient Jewish rabbinical history book)

Jubilees 4:28-29 And Adam died, and he lacked seventy years from one thousand years, for a thousand years are like one day in the testimony of heaven. And therefore it was written concerning the tree of knowledge: "On the day which you eat of it you will die." And for this reason he did not complete the years of this day, for in it he died.

Paul had a partner in preaching the gospel named Barnabas. He also wrote a book known as "the Epistle of Barnabas." This book was read in the early churches and used as a tool to assist in understanding the scriptures. Although this book is not a part of the bible, it is useful because it takes us back to the early days of the church and shows us what was being taught about prophecy while the apostles were still alive.

Barnabas 23:1-6 "Furthermore, it is written concerning the Sabbath, in the Ten Commandments, which God spoke on Mount Sinai to Moses, face to face; Sanctify the Sabbath of the Lord with pure hands and a clean heart. And elsewhere he said; If your children shall keep my Sabbaths, then will I put my of the Sabbath. And God made in six days the works of his hands; and he finished them on the seventh day, and he rested on the seventh day, and he sanctified it. Consider, my children, what that signifies. He finished them in six days. The

meaning of it is this; that in six thousand years the Lord God will bring all things to an end. For with him one day is as a thousand years; as he himself testifies, saying, Behold this day shall be as a thousand years. Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, shall all things be accomplished. And what is it that he said, and he rested the seventh day: he means this; that when his Son shall come, and abolish the season of the Wicked One, and judge the ungodly; and shall change the sun and the moon, and the stars; then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day."

Barnabas goes on to say in his book, that following the one thousand year heavenly Sabbath, the eighth day, the new world will begin. God also gives us another clue in the bible that the world will go on as normal for six thousand years when he infers that the punishment of the Jews for rejecting Christ will last for two thousand years.

According to the book of Revelation, there will be one thousand years, a heavenly Sabbath day, when the "church age" ends, after the first resurrection.

Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."

God clearly states that there will be a special one thousand year time period after the first resurrection. This again ties in perfectly with the teaching that there will be six thousand years of peace under the rule of Jesus Christ, and this will be followed by the eighth day, eternity, and the new creation of heaven and Earth. This one thousand year time period is commonly known as the "Millennium."

The heavenly week therefore seems to consist of three 2000 year time periods plus one heavenly sabbath of 1000 years completing a full week of 7000 years. Will this theory prove to be viable? We have only to wait until about the year 2030 to find out. Even if there is error

in our calendar that makes the heavenly week a bit longer we should see ample evidence of Christ's soon return by that time.

Additional note: The 7000 year theory of God's program for mankind does not mean that the Earth and the universe are only 6000 years old. The Earth and the universe may be millions, billions or trillions of years old, as they were created "in the beginning." The Lord created and placed human life, descended from Adam and his wife, on Earth about 6000 years ago.

The Days Of Noah

Jesus said that in the end times conditions on Earth would be like they were during the time of Noah.

Luke 17:26-27 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all."

Matthew 24:37-38 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

In order to more fully understand what world conditions will be like in the end times, we will look at how things were during "the days of Noah."

Genesis 5:22-25 & 28-29 And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away. When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed."

Noah was the great grandson of the illustrious Enoch, whom God took off of the Earth before the flood occurred.

Enoch being taken off of the Earth before the flood is a picture of the first resurrection, and Noah being brought through the flood in the ark is similar to the preservation of the one hundred and forty four thousand Israelites who will be sealed and survive through the pouring out of God's wrath of on the Earth.

Genesis 6:5-7 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the Earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the Earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth-- men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." Before the flood mankind turned wholly to evil.

The book of Jasher recounts some of the things that they were doing at that time. The book of Jasher is a Jewish historical book that is mentioned in the bible. (see Joshua 10:13 & 2 Samuel 1:18)

Jasher 4:16-20 And all the sons of men departed from the ways of the Lord in those days as they multiplied upon the face of the Earth with sons and daughters, and they taught one another their evil practices, and they continued sinning against the Lord. And every man made unto himself a God, and they robbed and plundered every man his neighbor as well as his relative, and they corrupted the Earth, and the Earth was filled with violence. And their judges and rulers took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the Earth and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other, in order to therewith provoke the Lord; And God saw the whole Earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon Earth.

According to another source of ancient history, the book of Enoch, the people before the flood were also practicing astrology, making swords and knives to kill one another, practicing sorcery, and learning all forms of evil from the fallen angels.

The Flood

Genesis 6:8-14 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Now the Earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the Earth had become, for all the people on Earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the Earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the Earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

Genesis 6:17-18 & 22 I am going to bring floodwaters on the Earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. everything on Earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark--you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Genesis 7:1 & 4 & 7 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Seven days from now I will send rain on the Earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the Earth every living creature I have made." And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the Earth.

1 Peter 3:20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,

God waited patiently while Noah built the ark and then poured out his judgment on the Earth.

Genesis 7:15-16 Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

The book of Jasher gives a more detailed account of Noah entering the ark and the reaction of the people outside of the ark.

Jasher 6:15-26 And Noah and his household, and all the living creatures that were with him, came into the ark on account of the waters of the flood, and the Lord shut him in. And all the sons of men that were left upon the Earth, became exhausted on account of the rain, for the waters were coming more violently upon the Earth, and there were other animals and beasts still surrounding the ark. And the sons of men assembled together, about seven hundred thousand men and women, and they came unto Noah to the ark. And they called to Noah saying, open for us that we may come to thee in the ark, wherefore should we die? And Noah, with a loud voice, answered them from the ark, saying, have you not all rebelled against the Lord, and said that he does not exist? And therefore the Lord brought upon you this evil, to destroy and cut you off from the face of the Earth. Is this not the thing that I spoke to you of one hundred and twenty years back, and you would not hearken to the voice of the Lord, and now do you desire to live upon the Earth? And they said to Noah, we are ready to return to the Lord; only open for us that we may live and not die. And Noah answered them, saying, behold now that you see the trouble of your souls, you wish to return to the Lord; why did you not return during these hundred and twenty years, which the Lord granted

you as the determined period? But now you come and tell me this on account of the troubles of your souls, now also the Lord will not listen to you, neither will he give an ear to you this day, so that you will not succeed in your wishes. And the sons of men approached in order to break into the ark, to come in on account of the rain, for they could not bear the rain upon them. And the Lord sent all the beasts and animals that stood around the ark. And the beasts overpowered them and drove them from that place, and every man went his way.

Genesis 7:20-24 The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. every living thing that moved on the Earth perished--birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the Earth, and all mankind. everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.

Genesis 9:18-19 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the Earth.

The Earth was repopulated after the flood by the children of the three sons of Noah and their wives.

2 Peter 2:4-9 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)--if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue Godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Just as he did in Noah's day, the Lord is able to deliver the Godly from his wrath, and he will do so for his church when he spares them from his wrath during the tribulation period. Rampant sexual sin is also a sign of the end times as it was prevalent in Sodom before its destruction. From that city we derive the term "sodomy."

Note: Sexual sin has always been around even before the flood and especially when God gave Israel the ten commandments. The difference today is that it is rampant everywhere in the world all at the same time. The Antichrist and the False Prophet under the control of Satan will no doubt promote all manner of sexual sin as being a good way to (falsely) worship God by enjoying the pleasures he created. Temple prostitutes both male and female were common when the book of Corinthians was being written.

The Signs Of The End Of The Age

Matthew 24:3 & 7-8 "As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains."

This is interesting because God has repeatedly compared the time of the end to the "days of Noah." In Noah's time, God granted 120 years for Noah to build the ark and preach to the people that the destruction of the Earth by water was imminent. God, in the bible, uses the same numerical patterns over and over again to signify certain themes. Therefore, it is highly likely that mankind will receive 120 years of warning before the return of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 6:3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

1 Peter 3:20 "God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,"

In the book of Jasher the 120 year time period allowed for repentance is explained even more clearly. Some have taught that this meant that the normal lifespan of mankind would be 120 years but this has been proven incorrect and is contradicted in the scriptures, The normal lifespan is between seventy and eighty years old,. Therefore God must have been talking about something else. What he was actually saying is explained in Jasher, he gave them three 40 year generations to repent.

Jasher 5:8 & 11 "For thus saith the Lord, behold I give you a period of one hundred and twenty years; if you will turn to me and forsake your evil ways, then I will also turn away from the evil which I told you, and it shall not exist, saith the Lord. And the Lord granted them a period of one hundred and twenty years, saying, if they will return, then will God repent of the evil, so as not to destroy the Earth."

Another indicator that God is giving us a special time period for repentance is the fact that the Pentecostal revival movement began in the early 1900's. God always sends preachers giving warning before judgment comes and opportunity for people who live righteously to escape destruction.

2 Peter 2:5 "if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;"

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The Pentecostals

"But it was the revival which began in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, in 1906, that was the launching pad of twentieth century Pentecostalism.

For three years, many hundreds of Christians from all over North America, and then from Europe and the third world, visited Azusa Street and took its message back with them. The fire spread quite rapidly, resulting in the formation of many new churches. "In the seventy years since Azusa Street, Pentecostalism has spread throughout the world."

In 1906, the modern day Pentecostal revival movement was born. It appears that God is giving us 120 years to repent, just as he did for the people of Noah's day. By adding the 120 years allowed for preaching and repentance to 1906 we come up with the year 2026. This is not very far from the result of adding the 30 year error of the Roman calendar to the year 2000, which brings us to the year 2030. God has not promised us that we could know the day or the hour of his return, but it seems clear that we are approaching the season.

The Sign Of The Fig Tree

The fig tree is one of the national symbols of the nation of Israel, in particular, those who are descended from the tribe of Judah, the Jews.

Jeremiah 24:3-7 Then the Lord asked me, 'What do you see, Jeremiah?' 'Figs,' I answered. 'The good ones are very good, but the poor ones are so bad they cannot be eaten.' Then the word of the Lord came to me: This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Hosea 9:10 "When I found Israel, it was like finding grapes in the desert; when I saw your fathers, it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig tree."

These Old Testament verses characterizing Judah and Israel as baskets of figs, and fruit on a fig tree, are one of the keys to understanding what time period we are in as far as biblical prophecy is concerned. The keys to understanding New Testament biblical prophecy, are found in the Old Testament. To unlock the mysteries of the book of Revelation one must first become familiar with the Old Testament writings. Jesus told the disciples that the sign of the fig tree would be one of the indicators that the time of his return was drawing near.

Matthew 24:32-34 "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. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."

Luke 21:29-36 He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and Earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole Earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

God has promised us in the book of Daniel that in the last days knowledge will be increased. While knowledge of all types has been increasing in the world since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the knowledge that God was referring to in particular was biblical knowledge, the words of the scroll of the book of Daniel.

Daniel 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

God can supernaturally increase knowledge through the direct working of the Holy Spirit whenever he chooses to do so, but in most cases he does it through means that appear normal to the unbelieving world. Biblical knowledge has been increasing greatly every year since the 1800's when archaeology became a science. In 1947 the dead sea scrolls were discovered, and they are still continuing to be translated to this day. Each year new discoveries are adding to biblical background knowledge, increasing our understanding of the prophetic scriptures. One document that has been discovered and translated is known as the apocalypse of Peter. According to this book, Peter and some of the disciples were on the mount of olives and asked the Lord what would be the signs of his coming and the coming of the end of the age.

Apocalypse of Peter (Paraphrased) "And you, learn a parable from the fig tree: As soon as the shoots come forth, and the twigs are grown, the end of the world shall come. And I, Peter answered the Lord and said unto him: Interpret unto me concerning the fig tree, so we may perceive it; for throughout all of its days the fig tree sends forth shoots, and every year it brings forth fruit for its master. What then does the parable of the fig tree mean? We do not understand it. And the Lord answered and said unto me: Do you not understand that the fig tree is the nation of Israel?

In 1948, Israel became a nation once more, after being scattered throughout the nations since 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. In 1967 they recaptured Jerusalem from the Arabs. The fig tree has budded. Some of the people who were born in 1948 and afterwards might live to see the return of Jesus Christ.

Psalms 90:10 "The length of our days is seventy years--or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they

quickly pass, and we fly away."

The bible says that seventy or eighty years is the normal life span for human beings. Jesus said that the generation that saw the budding of the fig tree, the restoration of the nation of Israel, would not pass away before his return. (If our interpretation is correct) When you add the normal life span for a human as stated in the Psalms, to the year 1948, you come up with a year between 2018 and 2028. This is also very close to the dates we calculated with the other methods of determining where we are in prophetic history.

The Sign Of The Gospel

Mark 13:10 "And the Gospel must first be preached to all nations."

Another sign that Jesus gave to his disciples that the end of the age was near is that the gospel would be preached to all nations. Bible translators have been working feverishly for the past fifty years to translate the scriptures into every language in the world. The invention of computers has greatly speeded up this work, and they are now very close to accomplishing this goal. At the end of 1994 at least one book of the bible was available to 98% of the population of the world. Portions of the scriptures have been translated into more than 2000 languages. The gospel is not only being distributed by the written word, but since the invention of radio, television, satellite television and now the internet the gospel is being beamed around the world, for the first time, since Jesus walked the Earth.

The Great Tribulation

If any of those previous calculations we have looked at are true, we could look for the last years of human history before the return of Christ, commonly called "the Great Tribulation" to begin, and the Antichrist to come into world power sometime between 2020 and 2030.

Matthew 24:21-22 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

There are many signs today that indicate that we are nearing the end of this present age, and that Christ should return sometime between the years 2000 and 2088. But, even if the Lord should tarry for another seven thousand years, or seventy thousand years, or even seven million years, God has promised to bless those who study his word and look for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Luke 12:37 Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching:

Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and Godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

A List Future Events According To Biblical Prophecy

This is not an exhaustive list or is it necessarily in the order that these things will occur. It is simply a listing of things to watch for as time goes on and see where we are at in biblical prophetic time. You can add to the list yourself as you study the bible and cross things off if they happen. The list is double spaced so you will have room for notes or additions.

Notice that the first resurrection or rapture is not in the list. Put it

where you want to. If it doesn't happen before something else, move it. It's bound to happen sometime and every move gets us closer. It has to happen before the physical return of Christ if we are to return with Him as the scripture says.

Zechariah 14:5 ...and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

Jude 1:14 KJV And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands (Myriads) of his saints,

1. The true church, called "Philadelphia," will be reviled by the world. It may be taxed even before the "mark" is put into effect.
2. The false dead church, called "Laodicea" will become the dominant church on the world scene with the false Prophet as it's leader.
3. The seven seals begin. Antichrist, war, famine, and disasters.
4. The False Prophet implements the "Mark of the Beast."
5. The Two Witnesses arrive on the scene and preach for 3 1/2 years and implement the 7 trumpet judgments.
6. After 3 1/2 years the Two Witnesses will be killed.
7. 3 1/2 days after their death, they will be raised from the dead and ascend to heaven.
8. The marriage supper of the Lamb will begin or continue taking place in heaven now that the Two Witnesses can join the festivities.
9. The Jews will realize that Jesus is the true Messiah when they miss the first resurrection.

10. The church and the old testament saints will celebrate with the Lord in his kingdom and receive rewards.
11. The Jews begin to pray for Jesus him to return and rescue them from the Antichrist.
12. The seven bowls of God's wrath will begin to be poured out on the earth.
13. The false religion "Mystery Babylon" will be destroyed by the kings of the earth who were deceived by it and now face God's wrath.
14. Evil demonic powers will gather the armies of the world to Armageddon
15. The Lord will return with his armies and his saints and destroy the armies of the world at Armageddon.
16. Satan is bound for 1000 years.
17. The millennium begins, 1000 years of peace on Earth under the rule of Jesus Christ.
18. Satan is released for a short time to test those born during the millennium.
19. Satan gathers those who hate Christ to Jerusalem for the final battle, a repeat of Armageddon. Satan loses again.
20. Satan and his armies are defeated. The final rebellion has been put down. Satan is cast into the lake of Fire.
21. The 2nd resurrection takes place and the last judgment occurs.
22. Unbelievers join Satan, the Antichrist, the false prophet and the fallen angels in the Lake of Fire.

23. Eternity begins - God has new projects for us to participate in. His kingdom expands forever.

This is a simple outline of the future based on biblical prophecy that remains to be fulfilled if prophecy is literal.

One very interesting thing to take note of is that we will no longer have to wait for thousands of years to find out if the seven thousand year theory concerning God's program for earth is true or false. This makes it an exciting time to be alive. We will see thousands of years of expectation (since the Book of Barnabas was written in the first century after Christ) either come to the culmination point of the first six thousand years, or not.

If so, then all of God's wonderful promises will begin to come to pass at his return and the millennium begin following that. If not then all of our speculation was wrong. We will either have to review the scriptures and come up with a new theory or perhaps admit that much of end times prophecy that many of us who study the Bible had taken literally really was just an allegory about the battle between good and evil and there will not be any actual discernible signs before his (Christ's) second coming. In any event, it really is an exciting time to be alive. We will know the answer no later than 2088, more likely 2030 and possibly even before.

Note: There have been hundreds of books written that deal with verse by verse explanations of the book of Revelation. Read two or three of them if you want detailed information about a particular end times topic. Go to your local Christian bookstore and ask to be directed to the prophecy section or to Amazon.com and type in "The book of Revelation." You will find many choices and you can also download the Kindle editions for many of them inexpensively.

This books primary focus is on things that may happen in our lifetimes, not things that are already fulfilled or things that may be

more than a thousand years in the future.

Chapter 6: The Mystery Of Iniquity

In order to understand a little bit more about the spiritual battle that is raging on Earth between God and the forces of evil, one has to have some knowledge about the being who is responsible for all forms of false religion. This mysterious being is known in the bible as Satan, Lucifer, and the devil. God, through the prophet Ezekiel, has revealed to us something about Satan while speaking about the king of Tyre, whom Satan apparently possessed.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: `This is what the Sovereign Lord says: You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the Earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings."

Satan was also known as the morning star, translated in the King James bible as "Lucifer," meaning "the light bearer." Isaiah tells us about the fall of Satan. The following prophecy pertains to both Satan and the Antichrist, whom Satan will possess during the tribulation period.

Isaiah 14:12-17 "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the Earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, `I will ascend to

heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: 'Is this the man who shook the Earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?'

Notice that all of the sins of Satan begin with "I will." The sins of Satan and the sins of mankind originate with the same concept, "I will," rather than "thy will be done," meaning God's will. Satan, according to the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha was the first and most powerful angel created by God. Michael was the second and Gabriel was the third. Each of these three had legions of other angels, that were created after them, under their command.

The Creation Of Adam And The Fall Of Satan (According to excerpts from the apocryphal gospel of Bartholomew)

Now after the resurrection and seven days before the Lord ascended to the father, he took the disciples and brought them to the top of the Mount of Olives. He said to the disciples, ask me what you wish, so I can teach you and show you, for I will soon ascend to the father. Bartholomew said to him, Lord, show us the adversary of men. And the other disciples also said, Lord, we wish to see him. And the Lord commanded Michael to bring him up, and Satan came up, held by six hundred and sixty angels. And the Lord said: in my name ask him what you wish. And Bartholomew asked him: Tell me who you are, and what is your name. He replied: If you wish to know my name, I was first called Satanel, which means 'angel of God,' but when I rejected the image of God, I was called Satan, which means 'angel of hell.' And again Bartholomew asked him "how did you come into this condition. And Satan replied: I was the first angel created, for when God made the heavens, he took a handful of fire and formed me first, Michael second, the captain of the hosts above, Gabriel third, and

myriad's of other angels to populate each of the seven heavens. And Satan said, I will tell you how I was cast down here and how God made man. I wandered to and fro in the world, and God said to Michael: Bring me Earth from the four ends of the world, and water out of the four rivers of Paradise. And when Michael had brought them, he formed Adam in the east, and gave form to the shapeless Earth, and stretched sinews and veins, and united everything into a harmonious whole. And when I came from the ends of the world, Michael said to me: "Worship the image of God which he has made in his own likeness." But I said, 'I am fire of fire. I was the first angel to be formed, and shall I worship clay and matter?' And Michael said to me: 'Worship, lest God be angry with you.' I answered, 'God will not be angry with me, but I will set up my throne over against his throne, and I shall be as he is.' Then God was angry with me and cast me down, after he had commanded the windows of heaven to be opened. When I was thrown down, Michael asked those angels under me whether they would worship Adam. They replied, like as we have seen the first angel do, we will not worship that which is less than ourselves, and they were cast down also.

This story may or may not be true but what it does do is depict the attitude of Satan towards God and man that we find in the bible. Although someone may have made this story up like an Aesop's fable, there certainly is a moral teaching to it. It does not pay to defy your maker. That pertains to us as well as to Satan.

According to this apocryphal book and the bible, it was pride that led to Satan and his angels fall. Because Satan was the first angel created, and because of his beauty, and because his body was created from fire, he felt that he should not bow down to anyone made from clay, even if it meant disobeying the command of God. The bible says that pride comes before a fall, and this statement may have originated thousands of years ago, when Satan fell.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Satan failed his test and lost his high position in heaven be it according to this story or some other way the result is the same, he was cast down to earth.

God may have prevented Satan from worshipping Adam, if Satan had agreed to do so, like he stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac at the very last moment. Satan and his angels fell because of their pride. The angels bodies were created from fire, unlike man's body which was created from the dust of the Earth. It is not the element from which the body of a being is formed that is important, it is the spirit of God that is placed in that body that gives it life and value. It appears that the angels bodies have fire and air as their base elements, while a human's body consists of Earth and water. When a man dies, his body returns to the dust from which he was created, until the first or second resurrection, and then the judgment. The spirit of a man returns to God who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 KJV Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

After the last judgment, Satan, and the angels who fell with him will return to their primary element of creation, fire, when they are cast into the lake of fire.

Psalms 104:4 & Hebrews 1:7 He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants. In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."

Matthew 25:41 "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.'"

Revelation 20:14-15 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Notice in the verse from Matthew, that the lake of fire was not created for humans, it was created for the devil and his angels. Satan and his angels will return to the fire from which they were created, along with all of those humans who have chosen to reject God and follow Satan's example of pride and rebellion.

Another apocryphal book that tells us an interesting story about Satan is called "the Gospel of Barnabas." This is not from the book "The Epistle of Barnabas" that was indeed read in the early churches. This is a later work by someone trying to add authenticity by using the name of Barnabas. Nevertheless, it is indeed an interesting story to think about.

Satan's Opportunity To Repent

(Paraphrased from the Gospel of Barnabas)

One day as the disciples were with Jesus they asked him about the day of judgment, and about Satan, and why he could not also be forgiven. Jesus replied, "verily I say unto you, I had compassion on Satan knowing how he fell, and I had compassion on mankind whom he tempts to sin. Therefore I called Satan, who came, saying: What must I do for thee, Jesus. I answered: you shall do good for yourself, for I desire not your services. Satan replied: if you do not desire my services, neither do I desire yours, because I am more noble than you, for you are clay, while I am spirit. Let us leave this I said, and tell me if it would not be good that you should return to your former beauty, and your first state. You must know that Michael the archangel will strike you with the sword of God on the day of judgment, and cast you into the lake of fire. Satan replied: We shall see on that day who can do more, certainly I have on my side many mighty angels and most potent idolaters who can trouble God, and he will know how great a mistake he made to banish me for a vile piece of clay. Then I said, "Satan, you are infirm in your mind and you know not what you are saying. Then Satan, in a derisive manner, wagged his head, saying: "come now, let us make this peace between me and God:

What do you say must be done Jesus, since you are of a sound mind? I answered: "Two words need only be spoken." Satan replied: "What words?" I answered: "These: I have sinned; have mercy on me." Then Satan said: "I will willingly make peace with God, if God will say those words to me."

While this apocryphal story is not in the bible, it does show one thing in a true light, the attitude of Satan and his followers concerning God. You will often find this type of attitude among atheists and those who believe that there is a God but they hate him, and among others who hate even the thought that their may be a God. This attitude is nothing more than a misguided sense of self importance, and a feeling that the universe should revolve around the desires of mankind, rather than accepting the fact that the universe revolves around the will of God who created it for his own pleasure.

Revelation 4:11 KJV Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Even though the universe and all that is in it was created by God for his own pleasure and he can do with it whatever he desires, he promises that for those who have faith and are following his path for their lives, all things are working for their future good.

Romans 8:28 KJV And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

The Origin Of Demons And Evil Spirits

The angels, just because they are heavenly beings and have seen the glory of God in person, are not immune from the temptation to sin. One third of them fell with Satan, and it appears that some of them, or some of the other angels fell into sin again at a later date. Job confirms the fact that angels can sin.

Job 4:18 & 15:15 If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay. If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!

Genesis 6:1-2 & 4 KJV And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the Earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. There were giants in the Earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

Some of the angels of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married them and had children. This may seem impossible, but if you notice in the bible, every appearance of an angel is in the form of the male species. Apparently angels have the functional capabilities of a human male, but God has commanded them not to use it, as a part of their testing. Some may object and say that the verses above pertain to the sons of Seth marrying the daughters of Cain, but Jude, quoting from the book of Enoch, rejects this interpretation.

Jude 1:6-7 KJV And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Jude compares the sin of the angels that left their first estate to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, calling it fornication, and going after strange flesh, which means illicit sexual union. Jude seemed to be quoting from the book of Enoch. (Note: The Book of Enoch is included

in the Canon of scripture of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Eritrean Orthodox Church)

Jude 1:14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

Paraphrased from the book of Enoch:

And the Lord said to Michael and Raphael, Bind those angels who sinned and throw them into the darkness: And on the great day of judgment they shall be cast into the abyss of fire.

Jude and Peter both seem to quote from the book of Enoch. Enoch was recognized as being a dependable historical record at the time the New Testament was being written. We will now take a look at the book of Enoch itself, and see what it says about the angels that sinned with the daughters of men, and the origin of evil spirits.

The Origin Of Evil Spirits According To Enoch

Paraphrased from the book of Enoch

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days there were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said one to another: Come let us choose wives for ourselves from among the children of men and beget children. And they took unto themselves wives' and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and the women became pregnant, and bare great giants. And the giants consumed all of the food of men. And when this could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against the birds,

and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one anothers flesh, and to drink the blood.

And then Michael, and Uriel, and Raphael, and Gabriel looked down from heaven and saw much blood being shed upon the Earth. And they said to the Lord of the ages: Lord of Lords, God of Gods, King of kings, the throne of thy glory standeth to all generations of the ages! Thou hast made all things, and hast power over all things, and thou seest all things, and nothing can hide itself from thee. Thou seest what thy angels have done, who have gone to the daughters of men on the Earth, and have defiled themselves, and revealed to them all kinds of sins, and the women have borne giants, and the whole Earth has been filled with blood and unrighteousness.

Then the Most High spoke, and sent Uriel to the son of Lamech (Noah) and said to him: Hide thyself! For the whole Earth and all that is alive in it will be destroyed in a flood. And Uriel instructed Noah in how to build the ark that he and his seed might escape and preserve the generations of the world. And Gabriel said to the Lord: Proceed against those who are destroying the Earth. And the Lord said to Michael and Raphael, Bind those angels who sinned and throw them into the darkness: And on the great day of judgment they shall be cast into the abyss of fire. And now the giants, who are produced from the spirits of flesh, shall be called evil spirits upon the Earth, and Earth shall be their dwelling. Evil spirits have proceeded from their bodies, because they are born from men, and from the holy angels. And they shall be evil spirits in the Earth. And the spirits of the giants shall afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the Earth, and cause trouble: They take no food, but nevertheless hunger, and thirst, and cause offences. And these spirits shall rise up against the children of men and the women, because they proceeded from them. They shall destroy without incurring judgment, until the day of the consummation, the great judgment, in which the age shall be consummated.

Demons, according to Enoch, are a mixed breed of beings, part

human and part angelic. The bodies of these beings were destroyed during the flood, but the Lord has permitted their spirits to remain free until the last judgment.

The demons of Jesus day knew and understood that there was a set time that they would be allowed to be free before their punishment would begin.

Matthew 8:28-29 When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

Jesus also referred to information found in the book of Enoch. Matthew 22:23-33 KJV The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? For they all had her.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

Jesus scolded the Sadducees for not recognizing the power of God to raise the dead, and for not knowing from the scriptures that the angels are not supposed marry or be given in marriage. Nowhere in our present day Old Testament scriptures, which is all that they had during the time of Christ's ministry, is it stated that the angels are not supposed to marry. Enoch is the only Jewish writing we know of that

was available during the time of Christ's ministry which states that angels are not supposed to marry.

Now I'm not trying to put the Book of Enoch in the canon of scripture but I am saying that in ancient times it was at least considered as a reliable historical record such as our Encyclopedia Britannica would be considered today.

1 Enoch 15:1-7 And the Lord spoke to Enoch saying: Go and say to the Watchers of heaven, wherefore have ye left the high, holy and eternal heaven, and lain with women, and defiled yourselves with them, and have begotten children with the blood of flesh, as the children of men, who die and perish? Therefore I have given them wives that they might impregnate them, and beget children by them, that thus they might replenish the Earth. But you, were formerly spiritual, living the eternal life, and immortal for all generations of the world. And therefore I have not appointed wives for you, for heaven was your dwelling.

Demons can inhabit the bodies of men and animals who are not protected by having the spirit of God in them. They (demons) still have human desires and lusts, but they cannot fulfill them unless they possess a human beings body and if they cannot find a willing human they can possess an animals body or perhaps even a tree. (A Dryad)

Matthew 8:30-32 The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

Acts 19:11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I

command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

Dealing with demons is not something to be sought after, as the seven sons of Sceva found out. But, we should not walk around in fear of them either. Satan, and fallen angels are simply created beings who are physically stronger than we are, and demons are a mixed breed being part angel and part human. All of them are as nothing compared to God and his power, and he gives authority over these beings to those who trust in him.

Luke 9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,

Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

Luke 10:20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Ephesians 6:11-12 KJV Put on the whole armor of God, that you will be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

I have included these things in this study because it helps us in our daily struggles to know who our enemies are and how they operate.

Chapter 7: Early Christian Doctrine

Here we are in the middle of a prophecy study and all of a sudden we come upon a study of doctrine? Why? How boring is that? Well, there are over 2000 Christian denominations in the world today. How in the world does anyone know who is teaching correct doctrine? Thank God understanding everything about the bible is not a prerequisite to salvation or we should all be lost. Doctrine is certainly not boring to me and shouldn't be for anyone desiring to avoid the disasters that will shortly be coming upon the world. It should be exciting to find a way to escape from the terrible things that are going to happen on the earth and avoid the lake of fire afterwards. Finding spiritual truth should be the most exciting thing in a persons life.

Matthew 10:32-33 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

While very little knowledge is necessary to just barely make it in to the kingdom a lot more is necessary to live a life pleasing to God while we are living in a human body. I think we all want to hear the words of the master "Well done thou good and faithful servant" when we die or go up in the rapture.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

I have studied early Christian doctrine for many years to try to find out which churches teachings are closest to the whole bible. Now, just because it was taught very early in church history does not mean that

everything is perfect but it is about as close as we can get. I look for teachings that were accepted while the Apostles were alive or at least some of those who learned about Christ directly from an Apostle. At the very least the documents must have been circulated during the first one hundred years after Christ's resurrection, by 133 AD. If the Apostles were alive while bad doctrine was being taught they would certainly have tried to rebut the false teaching if they knew about it.

One the earliest teachings of the church is "The Apostles Creed." This creed as best we can tell was the doctrine that was being used and taught during the time the book of Acts was being written. Everything needed for salvation is contained in this creed. All other studies such as prophecy and biblical history are good for Christian growth, but not necessary for salvation.

The Apostles Doctrine The term heresy comes from the Greek word meaning "to choose" and generally refers to the willful rejection of the normative doctrines of a group by a member of that group. The history of Christianity is bound up with the history of heresy because the historic orthodox Creeds were formulated to correct what were believed to be erroneous teachings. The result of these early struggles was the emergence of the rule of faith embodied in what is now called the Apostles' Creed. Almost every line of this creed is directly aimed at some important historical heresy.

It is affirmed by Ambrose "that the twelve Apostles, as skillful artificers assembled together, and made a key by their common advice, that is the creed; by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed, that the light of Christ may appear." It is believed that each disciple wrote one line of this creed. (Ambrose was an early writer of church history)

1. Peter, I believe in God the Father Almighty;
2. John, Maker of heaven and earth;
3. James, And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord;
4. Andrew, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary;

5. Philip, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;
6. Thomas, He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead;
7. Bartholomew, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
8. Matthew, From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead;
9. James Alpheus, I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church;
10. Simon Zealot, The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins;
11. Jude, The resurrection of the body;
12. Matthias, Life everlasting, Amen"

While it is not absolutely certain that the Apostles actually wrote this creed, nevertheless it is an early church document that reflects the true teaching of the scriptures in one short paragraph. The Apostles Creed is what this author believes in and it is a good test for anyone seeking to join a church to compare that churches doctrine against "The Apostles Creed." Any church teaching something other than what agrees with this creed is most likely in error and in disagreement with the scriptures.

Now, this does not mean that if they teach more true biblically backed doctrine that they are in error, only if they deny that one or more of these things are true and scriptural.

The Didache or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

Another document that explains the doctrines of the early Christian Church is called the Didache, meaning, "The Teaching." If you would like to know what the church taught and practiced during the first 100 years of Christianity then this will interest you. The teaching in it is still valid today and is mostly in agreement with the scriptures although sometimes it may go a little beyond what the bible requires.

What Does "Didache" Mean? The Greek word Didache means "teaching." The Didache is the short title of an ancient document that contains some very early Christian doctrines. Another title of the work is "The Teaching of the Apostles to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas were the Apostles to the Gentiles and the Didache may very well be a summary of the rules for Gentile converts that was formulated in Jerusalem sometime between AD 47 and AD 49 by Peter, James, Paul, Barnabas and the other Apostles in Jerusalem. If it was not written by the Apostles themselves then it was probably a product of the teaching of the leaders of the earliest Greek Speaking Churches.

Acts 15:1-2 & 4NIV Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

Acts 15:5-9 & 12 NIV Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

Acts 15:13-18 NIV When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers,

listen to me. Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' that have been known for ages.

Acts 15:19-20 NIV "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

Acts 15:22- NIV Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers.

Acts 15:23-27 NIV With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul--men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

Acts 15:28-31NIV It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell. The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

Notice that the Apostles in Jerusalem along with Paul and Barnabas composed and sent a letter to the Gentile church at Antioch. The letter contained instructions for the Gentile church and in it we know that their decision contained admonitions to avoid food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality. These admonitions are also included in the Didache. Any letter of so great an importance would have undoubtedly been preserved and shared with other churches. The Didache is the only early church document that seems to meet the criteria of being at least somewhat based on the letter that was sent from the Apostles in Jerusalem to the Gentile Churches.

Now, that does not mean that it is scripture or that the early church leaders did not add to it other rules and practices that they were following at that time. Undoubtedly the Apostles did not write this long of a document. But, most of it's content is almost scripture verbatim.

The didache was read and circulated among the churches though for the first few hundred years. Bishop Ambrose, now called Saint Ambrose an early church historian affirmed that it was still in use in the late 300's and early 4th century after Christ's first coming..

Ambrose of Milan Saint Ambrose was an archbishop of Milan who became one of the most influential ecclesiastical figures of the 4th century. He is counted as one of the four original doctors of the Church. Wikipedia

Acts 15:32-33 NIV) Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

THE DIDACHE (The Teaching)

Chapter I 1:1 There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and the difference between the two ways is great. 1:2 The way of life is this: first, you shall love the God who made you; second, your

neighbor as yourself, and whatever you would not have done to you, do not do to another. 1:3 And the teaching of these maxims is this: bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast on behalf of those who persecute you; for what thanks is there, if you love them that love you? Do not even Gentiles do the same? But love those who hate you, and you will not have an enemy.

1:4 Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts. If anyone gives you a blow on your right cheek, turn to him the other also, and you will be perfect [fullgrown, fully-mature]. If anyone compels you to go a mile, go with him two; if anyone takes your cloak, give him your coat also; if anyone takes from you what is yours, do not ask for it back nor try to use force.

1:5 Give to everyone who asks of you, and do not demand it back; for the Father wants something from his own free gifts to be given to all. Blessed is he who gives according to the commandment, for he is guiltless; but woe to him who receives; for if one who receives is actually in need, he is guiltless; but whoever receives when not in need will have to explain why he received and for what purpose; in prison he will be interrogated concerning the things he has done, and he will not depart from there until he has paid the last penny. 1:6 Yes, truly it has been said about this: "Let your alms sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give."

Chapter 2 2:1

And the teaching of the second commandment is this:

2:2 You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery; you shall not seduce or commit sodomy with young boys; you shall not fornicate. You shall not steal. You shall not be a fortune-teller; you shall not practice sorcery. You shall not kill a child by abortion nor slay it when it is born. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Note: The same sins the true church preaches against today)

2:3 You shall not commit perjury; you shall not give false testimony;

you shall not speak evil; you shall not bear malice;

2:4 you shall not be double-minded or double-tongued, for a double-tongue is a snare of death.

2:5 Your word shall not be false or empty, but confirmed by deeds.

2:6 You shall not be greedy or rapacious or hypocritical or malicious or arrogant. You shall not take up an evil plot against your neighbor.

2:7 You shall not hate anyone, but some you shall rebuke, and some you shall pray for, and some you shall love more than your own soul.

Chapter 3 3:1 My child, flee from everything that is evil and everything that is like it.

3:2 Do not be wrathful, for wrath leads to murder, nor jealous nor contentious nor quarrelsome, for from all these murder ensues.

3:3 My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication, nor a filthy-talker nor a lewd-looker, for from all these adulteries ensue.

3:4 My child, do not be an interpreter of omens, since it leads to idolatry, nor an enchanter nor an astrologer nor a magical purifier, nor wish to see them, for from all these idolatry arises. (Magical Purifier-One who casts spells of purification or good luck)

3:5 My child, do not be a liar, for lying leads to theft, nor avaricious nor conceited, for from all these thefts are produced.

3:6 My child, do not be a complainer, since it leads to blasphemy, nor selfwilled nor evil-minded, for from all these blasphemies are produced.

3:7 Be meek, for the meek will inherit the earth.

3:8 Be long-suffering and merciful and guileless and peaceable and good, and revere always the words you have heard.

3:9 You shall not exalt yourself, nor let your soul be presumptuous. Your soul shall not be joined with the lofty, but with the righteous and humble you shall walk.

3:10 Accept whatever happens to you as good, knowing that apart from God nothing comes to pass. Note: See Romans 8:28

Chapter 4 4:1 My child, remember night and day him who speaks the word of God to you; honor him as the Lord, for where his lordship is proclaimed, there is the Lord.

4:2 Seek out daily the faces of the saints, that you may rest in their words. (Christian fellowship)

4:3 You shall not desire schism, but shall set at peace those who contend. You shall judge righteously; you shall not show partiality when rebuking for transgressions.

4:4 You shall not vacillate (be double minded) about whether a thing will be or will not be.

4:5 You shall not be one who stretches out his hands to receive but one who draws them back when giving is needful.

4:6 If you have anything in your hands, give a ransom for your sins.

4:7 You shall not hesitate to give; neither shall you grumble when giving, for you know who is the fair paymaster of your reward.

4:8 You shall not turn away from him who is actually in need, but share with your brother in all things and not say things are your own, for if you are partners in what is imperishable, how much more so in perishable things?

4:9 You shall not remove your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their youth teach them the fear of God.

4:10 You shall not command in your bitterness your slave or your maid who hope in the same God as yourself, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both; for he comes not with regard for reputation, but to those whom the Spirit has prepared.

4:11 And you slaves, subordinate yourselves to your masters in shame and fear, as to an image of God.

4:12 You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.

4:13 You shall not abandon the commandments of the Lord, but guard what you have received, neither adding nor subtracting anything.

4:14 You shall confess your transgressions in the congregation; and you shall not come to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

Chapter 5 5:1 But this is the way of death: first of all, it is evil and full of curses, murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, fortune-tellings, sorceries, robberies; false testimony, hypocrisy, duplicity, deception, arrogance, malice, stubbornness, greed, filthy-talking, jealousy, audacity, pride, boastfulness;

5:2 persecuting good men, hating truth, loving falsehood, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not adhering to what is good nor to righteous judgment; watching not for that which is good but for that which is evil; far from gentleness and patience, loving worthless things, pursuing recompense, having no mercy for the needy, not working for him that is distressed, not recognizing him who made them; murderers of children, corrupters of the image of God, turning away from him that is in need, oppressing him that is distressed, advocates of the rich, unjust judges of the poor, utterly sinful. May you

be delivered, my children, from all these!

Chapter 6 6:1 Take heed lest anyone lead you astray from this way of teaching, for he who does so teaches you away from God.

6:2 If you can carry the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect [fullgrown, fully-mature]; but if you cannot, then do what you can.

6:3 Concerning food, bear what you can, but carefully keep away from food sacrificed to idols, for it is a worship-service to gods from the realm of the dead.

Chapter 7 7:1 Concerning baptism, baptize thus: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water.

7:2 But if you have no running water, baptize in other water, and if you cannot baptize in cold water, then warm water;

7:3 but if you have neither, pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

7:4 Before a baptism, let him who baptizes and him who is baptized fast, and any others who may be able to do so. And command him who is baptized to fast one or two days beforehand.

Chapter 8 8:1 Do not let your fasting be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second day and the fifth day of the week [Monday and Thursday], but you shall fast on the fourth day and the day of preparation. [Wednesday and Friday] (Note: This was included so that the Gentile converts would not appear to be following the practices of the Pharisees and legalists the very ones who brought the charges against them in the first place.)

8:2 Neither pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in his gospel: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom

come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for yours is the power and the glory, forever."

8:3 Pray this way three times a day.

Chapter 9 9:1 And concerning the thanks-giving [Eucharist-Communion], give thanks thus:

9:2 first, concerning the cup: "We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of your son David, which you have made known to us through your son Jesus; to you be the glory forever."

9:3 And concerning the broken bread: "We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through your son Jesus; to you be the glory forever.

9:4 As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and gathered together became one, so may your congregation be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ, forever."

9:5 But let no one eat or drink of your thanks-giving except those who have been baptized in the name of the Lord, for the Lord has said, "Do not give that which is holy to the dogs."

Chapter 10 10:1 And after you are filled, give thanks thus:

10:2 "We thank you, holy Father, for your holy name, which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through your son Jesus; to you be the glory forever.

10:3 You, Almighty Master, created all things for the sake of your name, and give men food and drink to enjoy, that they might give

thanks to you, but to us you give spiritual food and drink and eternal life through your son.

10:4 Above all, we give thanks that you are powerful; to you be the glory forever.

10:5 Remember your congregation, Lord, to redeem it from all evil and perfect it in your love; and gather it together, the one that has been sanctified, from the four winds into your kingdom which you have prepared for it; for yours is the kingdom and the glory forever.

10:6 May grace come, and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David! If anyone is holy let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen."

10:7 But let the prophets give thanks however they wish.

Chapter 11 11:1 Therefore, whoever comes and teaches you all these things aforesaid, receive him.

11:2 If the teacher himself is perverted and teaches a different doctrine to the subversion thereof, do not listen to him; but if he increases your righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as you would the Lord.

11:3 And concerning the apostles and prophets, do according to the command of the Gospel.

11:4 Let every apostle who comes to you be received as you would the Lord.

11:5 He will stay one day, and if necessary, a second day, but if he stays three days, he is a false prophet.

11:6 Let the apostle when departing take nothing except bread until he arrives at his next lodging. But if he asks for money, he is a false

prophet.

11:7 Do not tempt or dispute with any prophet who speaks in spirit, for every sin will be forgiven, but this sin will not be forgiven.

11:8 However, not every one who speaks in spirit is a prophet, but only he who has the disposition of the Lord; therefore, by their dispositions the false prophet and the prophet shall be known.

11:9 Any prophet who orders a meal in spirit shall not eat of it; if he does, he is a false prophet.

11:10 If any prophet who teaches the truth does not do what he teaches, he is a false prophet.

11:11 And any prophet, true and approved, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself doeth, shall not be judged by you, for his judgment is with God; for likewise also did the prophets of old.

11:12 If anyone says in spirit, "Give me silver," or whatever else, do not listen to him; but if he tells you about others in need, that you should give to them, let no one condemn him.

Chapter 12 12:1 Let every one who comes in the name of the Lord be received, and then examine him judiciously -- right and left -- for the opinions he holds.

12:2 If the one who comes is a traveler, assist him as much as you can, but he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, unless there is a necessity.

12:3 If he wishes to settle with you and is a craftsman, let him work for his living.

12:4 If he is not a craftsman, decide according to your own judgment

how he shall live as a Christian among you, but not in idleness.

12:5 If he will not do this, he is one who makes gain from Christ. From such keep aloof.

Chapter 13 13:1 Every true prophet who desires to settle among you is worthy of his food.

13:2 Likewise, a true teacher also is worthy, but like the craftsman, he works for his living.

13:3 Therefore, take the first-fruits of every product of the wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, and give it to the prophets, for they are your chief priests.

13:4 And if you have no prophet, give it to the poor.

13:5 If you make bread, take the first-fruits and give according to the commandment.

13:6 In like manner, when you open a jar of wine or oil, take the first-fruits and give it to the prophets.

13:7 Yes, and of money and clothing and every possession, take the firstfruits, as seems good to you, and give according to the commandment.

Chapter 14 14:1 Gather together on the Lord's day, break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure.

14:2 But do not let anyone who has a quarrel with a companion join with you until they have been reconciled, so that your sacrifice may not be polluted;

14:3 for this was spoken by the Lord: "In every place and time offer

me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles."

Chapter 15 15:1 Therefore, elect for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, true and approved, for they also perform for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers.

15:2 Therefore, do not despise them, for they are your honorable men, along with the prophets and teachers.

Notice that in verse 15:1 it says "Elect for yourselves" which is in stark contrast to the doctrine that bishops must only be consecrated by other bishops, and the doctrine of "apostolic succession" upon which the hierarchy of the papacy was founded. The fact that it includes this democratic doctrine of the congregation electing their bishops is probably why the Roman Catholic Church excluded the Didache from their Tradition and doctrine, and the reason why it is not in common use today.

15:3 And reprove one another, not in anger but peaceably, as you have it in the Gospel, and let no one speak to any one who wrongs his brother, neither listen to him, until he repents.

15:4 And your prayers and almsgiving and all your deeds, do as you find it in the Gospel of our Lord.

Chapter 16 16:1 Be watchful for your life; do not let your lamps be quenched or your loins be ungirded, but be ready, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord comes.

16:2 Be often gathered together, seeking what is fit for your souls, for the whole time of your faith will not profit you if you are not perfect [full-grown, fully-mature] at the end of the season.

End Times Prophecy from the Didache

16:3 For in the last days false prophets and seducers will be multiplied, and the sheep will be turned into wolves, and love will be turned into hate.

16:4 For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God, and he will do signs and wonders, and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will do unlawful things such as never happened since the world began.

16:5 Then the creation of man will come to the fiery trial of testing, and many will stumble and perish, but those who endure in the faith will be saved alive from under the curse.

16:6 And then will appear the signs of the truth: first the sign of an opening in the heavens, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead:

16:7 not of all, but as it is said: "The Lord will come and all his saints with him."

16:8 Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven. This abbreviated version of the apocalypse is the simplest and clearest teaching about the end times that I have ever seen.

Also worth noting: nothing in the Didache indicates any awareness of the Jewish rebellion in AD 66 or the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. So, this document was probably composed between Pentecost in the book of Acts (about 33 or 34 AD) and prior to 66 AD. If so then the teaching contained in the Didache is what was being taught by the Apostles during the first 33 years of the church age.

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Jude 3:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the

common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

The early church was indeed following the Apostles doctrine and to the faith once delivered unto the saints. So, we know from the bible that true faith and doctrine was once being taught and practiced when the books of Acts and Jude were written.

This document (the Didache) seems to be the closest historical non biblical record we can find that outlines the practices of the early church. You may ask, "why should we seek out a non biblical record?" The answer is because we have 2000 denominations that all differ and claim to be right and claim that their teachings come directly from the bible. Therefore we need some independent confirmation of the practices of the early church, not for salvation purposes because that requirement is minimal, but for historical understanding of sound doctrine.

In my opinion a person or church could not go wrong by adopting most of the teaching contained in "The Apostles Creed" and some of the teachings of the "Didache" as a foundation for their faith. No human uninspired writings are perfect but I would rather rely on teachings that date from the foundations of the early church than from doctrines that became popular hundreds of years after the deaths of the Apostles. That is just my opinion, you are free to accept it or reject it.

SALVATION

Romans 10:9 NKJV that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

If you have read about the end times and don't want to be left behind you can be reconciled to God the Father right now through Jesus

Christ. Simply speak to God and say: Dear God, I believe Your Word, the Gospel. (good news) I believe in Jesus Christ that he died in my place to pay for my sins. I believe he rose from the dead and will raise me someday. Forgive me all of my sins through Jesus and make me into the kind of person you want me to be.

That's it. The rest is up to him. If you really meant it the Holy Spirit will come into your life and begin to change you. Sometimes changes are fast and sometimes slower, but you will be a new person in Christ. Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the scriptures and you will have an exciting journey through this life ahead of you and eternal life at the end.

Titus 1:1-2 NIV Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness-- a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot not lie, promised before the beginning of time,

Remember, God cannot Lie! He has promised eternal life for those who have faith in Jesus Christ and he will bring it to pass.

Chapter 8: How To Be Happy, Joyous and Free!

Well, we made it through doctrine, now for some good stuff. I don't want you to think that Christianity and prophecy is all gloom and doom. We don't have to be sad because the world seems to be going to Hades in a hand-basket. The exact opposite is true. When we know the truth the truth will set us free.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Introduction

First of all, before we start the actual study, if you have not received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, do so now. Then all of the promises in God's word will apply to you also, and you can be happy, joyous and free. The prayer for salvation is at the very end of this book. Turn there now if you wish to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and begin the journey to happiness, joyfulness and freedom.

God desires that all people be saved, that is that all would believe on Jesus Christ and receive the promise of eternal life.

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

John 6:38-40 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Happy, Joyous and Free

I heard the statement made one time by a man who said, "I know that it is God's will for me to be happy, joyous and free." Those words stuck in my mind for months. How could he know that?, I wondered at various times when his words popped into my mind. What if God wants us to go through a time of suffering? What if it is God's will for us to be miserable? Shouldn't we just accept it and play the hand that is dealt to us? Why should we try to be happy if God wants us sad? Is what he said scriptural? These questions and more like them nagged at my mind for months until one day I decided to do something about it. I decided to search the scriptures to see if I could find out if there was any validity to what he said, it or if it was just the ramblings of a formerly drunken old man who was now sober and read that phrase in some twelve step recovery book.

While researching this project I discovered that in many cases the words happy and joyous are from the same Greek root word in the New Testament. There are two Greek root words used often and their descriptions are presented below, taken from Strong's Hebrew - Greek lexicon. 5479. chara, khar-ah'; from G5463; cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight:-- gladness, X greatly, (X be exceeding) joy (-ful, -fully, 2114. euthumeo, yoo-thoo-meh'-o; from G2115; to cheer up, i.e. (intrans.) be cheerful; neut. comp. (adv.) more So, since these words seem to be for the most part interchangeable we will look at the scriptures pertaining to them together.

Also I have used various translations of the bible (KJV, NIV and the NCV) to express the thoughts in more understandable English for the younger generation. Feel free to look up the verses in any translation you choose. The word translated "Blessed" in older English translations is translated as "Happy" in the newer versions. Happy is closer to the original meaning of the word in Greek and Hebrew.

Being Happy, Joyous and Free is God's Will

Deu 28:47-48 Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, therefore in hunger and thirst, in

nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.

(Neh 8:10 NIV) Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

I discovered that in the Old Testament that when the Israelites failed to rejoice and be appreciative when God was blessing them with prosperity, it was counted to them as sin and angered the Lord. So, when life is going well we should never forget to rejoice and praise God for his many blessings, or we may lose them all. In other words it is not just an option to rejoice, it is a necessity in order continue to maintain a happy life.

We need to get it into our minds that it is not just an option to be happy, joyous and free, it is a command of Christ and a theme throughout the scriptures. In other words it is a sin not to be happy, joyous and free. If we are living in sin we cannot receive all that God has to offer in his plan for our life. So, if a person is not happy, joyous and free they need to stop sinning and get on with God's program. It may not be easy to get ones self out of a sad and depressed mode of life, but the scriptures contain things we can do to move down the road toward the goal of happiness in the Lord.

It's A Command To Be Happy, Give Thanks, And Sing Praises To God

Psa 68:4 Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds -- his name is the LORD-- and rejoice before him.

1 Th 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

If something is a command Then it is a sin not to do it. As the scripture says, if someone knows something is right but doesn't practice it then to them it is sin. So, it is a sin not to be joyful, now that you know it.

James 4:17 *Anyone who knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, is sinning.*

In the middle ages many misguided souls thought that a pure expression of Christianity was to be like a monk in a silent world away from everyone and practicing penance and stoic behavior, punishing the body. It was at a time like this in his life that Martin Luther while climbing the stairs of a chapel on bloody knees that he received the revelation that salvation was by grace through faith, not by works.

He afterwards wrote many songs expressing his joy to the Lord for giving him the understanding of the simple gospel that was preached from the beginning of the Christian era, but lost as the worship of God gradually became a system of rituals rather than being led by the Holy Spirit. If we can rejoice in nothing else, we can rejoice that the gospel is freely preached in the United States and that we can worship freely in spirit and in truth as God commands.

Psa 68:3 *But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.*

What if I'm not real happy with my present circumstances?

How can we rejoice and be glad when things are not going so well? How can we be happy if tragedy has struck in our lives or if we are sick, sad or even depressed? The answer is that we must look to the future. We must put our thoughts on the fact that God has a good plan for our life and he will eventually fulfill it, though maybe not as quickly as we would like, maybe not even in this world. But, since God cannot lie we know happiness and joy are coming, sooner or later, so we can rejoice in that even in the midst of a time of trial and testing.

Num 23:19-20 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? I have received a command to bless; he has blessed, and I cannot change it.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Jer 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Prov 10:28 The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

We need to pray for restoration to joy if we are bogged down in bad circumstances. For some of us we may need to pray to have joy for the first time ever in our lives. Many of us have never experienced true spiritual joy at anytime during our entire lives. Many of us were in bad circumstances when we came to Christ and have never really experienced the joy of our salvation. It's OK to ask for it.

Psa 90:15 We have seen years of trouble. Now give us as much joy as you gave us sorrow.

Psa 51:12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Psa 86:4 Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Ask For Joy In Jesus Name

John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

What Brings Joy?

If we do not have joy in our lives then there is something wrong. We have already seen from the scriptures that it is God's will for us to be joyful. So, if we are not joyful then we need to identify the problem that is preventing us from having joy and fix it, in accordance with the scriptures.

Joy Comes From Believing In Jesus Christ

First of all joy begins on the day we are saved and begin our Christian life in Christ.

1 Pet 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly happy."

Joy Comes From Knowing We Are Saved

Acts 16:34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God- -he and his whole family.

Psa 32:1 Happy is the person whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned.

Rom 4:7-8 "Happy are they whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned. Happy is the person whom the Lord does not consider guilty."

Rom 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Psa 13:5 But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.

Isa 61:10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Luke 10:20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Rejoice In The Hope We Have In Christ

Hab 3:18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Luke 1:47 my heart rejoices in God my Savior,

Acts 2:26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope.

Rom 5:2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

We Should Rejoice In The Promises Of God

Psa 119:162 I am as happy over your promises as if I had found a great treasure.

Heb 4:1 Now, since God has left us the promise that we may enter his rest, let us be very careful so none of you will fail to enter.

2 Pet 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

1 John 2:25 *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

Joyfully Give Thanks and Happy Are The Righteous

Col 1:12 *And you will joyfully give thanks to the Father*

Psa 1:1 *Happy are those who don't listen to the wicked, who don't go where sinners go, who don't do what evil people do.*

Psa 32:2 *Happy is the person whom the LORD does not consider guilty and in whom there is nothing false.*

Psa 32:11 *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

Psa 33:1 *Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.*

Psa 97:11 *Light is shed upon the righteous and joy on the upright in heart.*

Our relationship with christ enables us to receive joy from God the Father. Coming to faith in Christ connects us to the Father so that he can bring joy into our lives.

Psa 4:7 *You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound.*

Jude 1:24 *God is strong and can help you not to fall. He can bring you before his glory without any wrong in you and can give you great joy.*

Rom 15:13 *I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then your hope will overflow by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 2:28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.

Jesus Was Full Of Joy Through The Holy Spirit

Luke 10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

We Receive that Joy From The Father Through The Holy Spirit

The method God uses to bring joy into our lives is the same as the method he used to give Jesus joy during his ministry on earth. He gives us joy through the Holy Spirit.

1 Thess 1:6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Rom 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Love, Joy And Peace All Are Fruit Of The Holy Spirit

If you want a happy life try practicing the fruit of the spirit on a daily basis. In every situation ask yourself what is the loving thing to do, the peaceful; thing to do, the kind thing to do, and so on. By doing so you will be fulfilling the law of love. Seeking after Love is seeking after God, because he is love, and love brings joy.

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

1 Cor 13:13-14 So these three things continue forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love. You should seek after love.

1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

1 John 4:16 And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love. God is love. Those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

We Begin In Fear But End In Love

Many of us come to Christ initially because of fear, whether fear of hell or fear of a continuing miserable life. Eventually though as we draw closer to God and study his word we begin to fear less and love more as we see how the Lord first loved us and cares for us. While it is impossible in this life to have perfect love, the closer we come to it the happier we will be. Strive for perfect love if you want to be happy, joyous and free.

Psa 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

Job 28:28 And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'

1 John 4:18-19 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

Seeking The Lord Should Make Us Joyful

Once we are born again we should begin to seek after God and his will for our lives. Just the action of seeking after God should bring us joy, even if we haven't found his perfect will for our lives yet. We can rejoice during the seeking period because we know that God promised that if we seek after him we will find him.

Mat 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

1 Chr 16:10 Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Psa 70:4 But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, "Let God be exalted!"

Psa 105:3 Be glad that you are his; let those who seek the LORD be happy.

Studying God's Word And Precepts Brings Joy and Success

As we have seen seeking the Lord brings us joy. How can we seek him and get that joy? By studying and meditating on his word, day and night.

Josh 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Psa 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Psa 119:111 Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart.

Jer 15:16 When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty.

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

(James 1:25 NCV) But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy.

Understanding God's Word Brings Joy

As we are seeking God and studying his word, soon understanding begins to come to us and increases our joy even more. Do you remember when you first became a Christian the joy you had when you began for the first time to understand the meaning of the scriptures? There is so much truth and knowledge in the Bible that our joy should be unending in this lifetime because no matter how much we study his word there are always new things to learn. Gods word is like a well that never runs dry.

Neh 8:12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

Prov 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Prov 3:18 As a tree produces fruit, wisdom gives life to those who use it, and everyone who uses it will be happy.

Eccl 8:1 No one is like the wise person who can understand what things mean. Wisdom brings happiness; it makes sad faces happy.

Joy Comes From Obeying God's Commands

Once we begin to understand portions of God's word we need to begin to put it into practice. Not in a legalistic sense as the Pharisees were doing in Jesus day, but in the way Jesus taught, in the way of love.

Mat 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

John 15:9-12 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

Joy comes from obeying God's commands in a spirit of love, not by his commands being a burden and a weight about our necks.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

When we realize how much more wonderful our life is when we follow God's plan his commands are a joy to perform, because life just gets better and better the more we perform his word.

Luke 11:27-28 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out to Jesus, "Happy is the mother who gave birth to you and nursed you." But Jesus said, "No, happy are those who hear the teaching of God and obey it."

Eccl 3:12 I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy

and do good while they live.

John 13:17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Following God's Commands Brings Peace Along With Joy

Again, the following of God's commands is not for the sake of salvation through legalism, but for happiness due to the natural results of wise living. For example, the bible says in Proverbs that if you co-sign a loan for someone you may suffer for it. How many people have co-signed for someone and when that person could not pay the co-signer had to pay or face a black mark on their own credit rating? Then they may become sad because their own finances are in jeopardy.

Prov 22:26-27 Don't promise to pay what someone else owes, and don't guarantee anyone's loan. If you cannot pay the loan, your own bed may be taken right out from under you.

This is just one example of hundreds of wise commands in the scriptures. The book of Proverbs and the entire New Testament is full of wisdom for daily living. Those who follow God's manual for human living will have happier lives than those who don't. Even non Christians who follow God's laws unknowingly are blessed even if they are not saved. It just makes good sense to use the tools our creator has given us. He knows better than anyone what we need to do be happy because he designed us in his own image. What makes God happy makes us happy because we are his workmanship. As the old TV show title said, "Father Knows Best."

Rom 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

Rom 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Psa 19:8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Psa 119:1-2 Happy are those who live pure lives, who follow the Lord's teachings. Happy are those who keep his rules, who try to obey him with their whole heart.

Psa 119:14 I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

Psa 119:32 I will quickly obey your commands, because you have made me happy.

Psa 119:35 Lead me in the path of your commands, because that makes me happy.

Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Psa 128:1 Happy are those who respect the LORD and obey him.

Those Who Live Pure And Righteous Lives Will Be Happy

Mat 5:6 Those who want to do right more than anything else are happy, because God will fully satisfy them.

Mat 5:8 Those who are pure in their thinking are happy, because they will be with God.

Be Happy, But Always Reverent

Psa 2:11 Obey the LORD with great fear. Be happy, but tremble.

Doing What is Right Brings Us Happiness and We Will Eventually Reap a Harvest With Joy

Psa 106:3 Happy are those who do right, who do what is fair at all times

Prov 8:32 "Now, my children, listen to me, because those who follow my ways are happy.

Psa 126:5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Being Happy Is Good For Our Health

A byproduct of being happy is better health. No matter what the state of our health is, if we are happy it is better than what it would be if we were sad or depressed. When we are sad or depressed or grieving we tend not to eat right and to neglect our personal care and needs. This leads to further problems which make us even more depressed. An example would be a person grieving over the ending of a relationship then fails to do a good job at work because of the sorrow and gets fired. Then that person has double the problems. While that might be extreme it is common for people under stress to neglect to pay their bills even if they have the money and then get in trouble with the bill collectors and damage their credit rating. For our own good health and mental sanity we need to be joyful as much as is humanly possible. It will save us a lot of grief in other areas of our lives.

Prov 15:13 A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit.

Prov 15:30 A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.

Prov 16:24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, making people happy and healthy.

Prov 17:22 A happy heart is like good medicine, but a broken spirit drains your strength.

God's Correction Should Bring Us Joy Because It Shows He Loves Us

Once we learn God's word we are responsible to perform it. Even if we have the opportunity to learn and understand his word and fail to do it we are still responsible for it, so there is no getting out of it. Some might say, I'm not going to go to church because I might hear that something that I'm doing is a sin and then I'll have to quit or God might chasten me. If you feel that way I hate to burst your bubble, but if you have the opportunity to learn but pass on it you are still responsible. So, we may as well get on with the program and learn God's will for our lives and do it. It's all for the best anyway because he loves us and wants the best for us. So when God corrects us, let's do like David did after his fall into sin and repent immediately and get back to being blessed rather than chastened.

2 Sam 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin.

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty

Psa 94:12 LORD, those you correct are happy; you teach them from your law.

Heb 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Maintaining Faith In Times Of Pain Will Eventually Bring Us Joy

Job 6:10 Then I would still have this consolation-- my joy in

unrelenting pain-- that I had not denied the words of the Holy One.

Job 8:21 God will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

Psa 30:5 His anger lasts only a moment, but his kindness lasts for a lifetime. Crying may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

Psa 30:11 You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.

Psa 31:7 I will be glad and rejoice in your love, because you saw my suffering; you knew my troubles.

Rejoice That God Is Guiding Your Path

God's chastening and correction and enduring through hard times should make us joyful because we know that if God is chastening us he loves us and if he loves us then he is guiding our path. And, if he is guiding our path then it will eventually lead to perfect peace and joy and happiness with him in his kingdom.

Psa 1:1-3 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Psa 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

Psa 16:11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed

on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Agreeing With God Brings Us Happiness

When we line up our will with God's will we bring happiness to ourselves. This is so because God will bring to pass his plan for our lives, and if we are in agreement and aligned with his plan and his plan is the desire of our heart then we will get what we want and that will bring us happiness. It is a natural tendency of mankind to rejoice when we get what we want. So, If we want what God wants, we will eventually get it.

Psa 112:1 Praise the LORD! Happy are those who respect the LORD, who want what he commands.

Psa 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Trusting In God Brings Happiness

As we recognize that God is guiding our path through life we can begin to trust him, and as we trust him more and more our joy increases with our faith.

Psa 28:7 The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him, and he helps me. I am very happy, and I praise him with my song.

Psa 34:8 Examine and see how good the LORD is. Happy is the person who trusts him.

Psa 40:4 Happy is the person who trusts the LORD, who doesn't turn to those who are proud or to those who worship false gods.

Prov 16:20 Whoever listens to what is taught will succeed, and whoever trusts the LORD will be happy.

Psa 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

The Deeds Of The Lord Should Make Us Rejoice

We need to be sure to rejoice when God brings good things into our lives. If we could fall into the same sin as the Israelites in the wilderness, grumbling and complaining which brings a curse to our lives.

Psa 92:4 For you make me glad by your deeds. O LORD; I sing for joy at the works of your hands.

Psa 118:15 Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things.

Psa 126:2-3 Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

Be Happy Trusting In God For Protection

Psa 2:12 Show that you are loyal to his son, or you will be destroyed by his anger, because he can quickly become angry. But happy are those who trust him for protection.

Psa 5:11 But let everyone who trusts you be happy; let them sing glad songs forever. Protect those who love you and who are happy because of you.

Psa 84:12 LORD All-Powerful, happy are the people who trust you!

Be Happy And Joyful Calling On The Lord For Help And Refuge

Psa 34:5 Those who go to him for help are happy, and they are never

disgraced.

Psa 5:11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Psa 64:10 Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him; let all the upright in heart praise him!

Be Happy In Times Of Trouble And Temptation To Develop Patience

Rom 5:3 We also have joy with our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce patience.

Rom 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Col 1:11-12 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

James 5:13 Anyone who is having troubles should pray. Anyone who is happy should sing praises.

Psa 94:19 I was very worried, but you comforted me and made me happy.

Being Respectful and Well Behaved Brings Happiness

People who are hard headed and out of control bring misery upon themselves. Those who behave in a decent manner, Honoring and respecting those who deserve it will have a longer and happier life.

Rom 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Prov 28:14 Those who are always respectful will be happy, but those who are stubborn will get into trouble.

Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Deu 5:16 "Honor your father and your mother as the LORD your God has commanded you. Then you will live a long time, and things will go well for you in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you.

Eph 6:2-3 "Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

1 Tim 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

1 Pet 2:17 Show respect for all people: Love the brothers and sisters of God's family, respect God, honor the king.

Be Wise About What Is Good And Innocent, Avoid Evil And Rejoice In The Truth

A falsehood has developed down through the centuries that one must experience some evil in order to understand it better and deal with it. This has been used as an excuse for wild behavior in ones younger years and excused as just "sowing some wild oats." This type of thinking has brought lifetimes of sorrow to many people. It only takes one illicit encounter to be infected with AIDS. Recreational drug use can quickly lead some people to cocaine, crack, crank, speed or

heroin addiction. Dabbling in the occult can lead to demonic possession. We do not need to experience evil to understand it is evil any more than we need to suffer a broken leg to know it hurts. Avoid becoming entangled in any type of evil and you will save yourself from many sorrows. Avoiding sorrow leads toward happiness and joy.

Rom 16:19 Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

1 Cor 13:6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

1 Pet 3:10 The Scripture says, "A person must do these things to enjoy life and have many happy days. He must not say evil things, and he must not tell lies.

Psa 32:10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

1 Tim 6:10-12 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Be Happy And Enjoy What God has Blessed you With, Whether It Be Little Or Much

We should learn, like Paul to be happy in all types of circumstances. We should be happy that we have food to eat, the things that we need to stay alive and for everything in addition to that which God has blessed us with.

Psa 128:2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt

thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

Acts 14:17 Yet he proved he is real by showing kindness, by giving you rain from heaven and crops at the right times, by giving you food and filling your hearts with joy."

Luke 3:14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay."

1 Tim 6:7-8 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

Phil 4:12 I know how to live when I am poor, and I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens, when I have enough to eat and when I go hungry, when I have more than I need and when I do not have enough.

Job 1:21 He said: "I was naked when I was born, and I will be naked when I die. The LORD gave these things to me, and he has taken them away. Praise the name of the LORD."

Having Mercy Helping The Poor And Less Fortunate Brings Joy And Happiness

Psa 41:1 Happy is the person who thinks about the poor. When trouble comes, the LORD will save him.

Prov 14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

Mat 5:7 Those who show mercy to others are happy, because God will show mercy to them.

Going To The House Of The Lord Should Bring Us Joy

Psa 43:4 Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

Psa 122:1 A song of ascents. Of David. I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

We Should Rejoice When Other People Speak And Walk In The Truth

Prov 23:16 my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.

2 John 1:4 It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us.

3 John 1:43 It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear that my children are following the way of truth.

Sharing Others Joy Brings Happiness

(Luke 1:58 NIV) Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

Sweet Smells Can Cheer Us Up

Even unbelievers know that a sweet smelling home brings cheer. That is why there are so many air fresheners sold at the grocery store. Think of that every time you go past them in the aisle while shopping. Make your home smell clean and sweet for a happier life.

Prov 27:9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

Entire Nations Should Be Happy If They are Serving The Lord

Psa 33:12 Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his very own.

Psa 67:4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth. Selah

Joel 2:21 Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things.

Freedom

Not only does God want us to be happy and joyous, he wants us to be free. Free from worry, free from anxiety, free from care, free from sin, free from bondage, free to live a happy life.

Psa 111:9 He sets his people free. He made his agreement everlasting. He is holy and wonderful.

Luke 1:68 "Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to help his people and has given them freedom.

2 Cor 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Gal 1:4 Jesus gave himself for our sins to free us from this evil world we live in, as God the Father planned.

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

1 Tim 2:6 He gave himself as a payment to free all people.

Our Freedom Comes By Way Of Faith In Christ

Rom 3:24 and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ.

Eph 1:7 In Christ we are set free by the blood of his death, and so we have forgiveness of sins. How rich is God's grace,

Eph 3:12 In Christ we can come before God with freedom and without fear.

We can do this through faith in Christ. Studying And Knowing God's Word (The Truth) Brings Freedom

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

James 1:25 But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free, and they continue to study it.

Following God's Commands, His Will For Our Lives Brings Freedom

Psa 119:32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.

Psa 119:45 So I will live in freedom, because I want to follow your orders.

Prayer To The Lord In Times Of Trouble Can Set Us Free

Psa 118:5 I was in trouble, so I called to the LORD. The LORD answered me and set me free.

Living In Sin Makes Us Un-Free, Slaves To Sin

John 8:33-36 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

2 Pet 2:19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity--for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

James 1:27 Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence.

We Are Free From The Law Of Moses

Acts 13:38 Brothers, understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through Jesus. The law of Moses could not free you from your sins. But through Jesus everyone who believes is free from all sins.

Rom 7:4 In the same way, my brothers and sisters, your old selves died, and you became free from the law through the body of Christ. This happened so that you might belong to someone else--the One who was raised from the dead--and so that we might be used in service to God.

Gal 5:1 We have freedom now, because Christ made us free. So stand strong. Do not change and go back into the slavery of the law.

We Are Free From A Guilty Conscience

Heb 10:22 let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith, because we have been made free from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

We Are Free From Sin

We are free from sin in two ways through Christ. First of all we are free from its effect of separating us from God forever. Secondly, if we walk in the Spirit we can be free from continual, habitual sin, even though we may slip up once in awhile, we do not have to live continually under the power and bondage of sin in this life.

1 Cor 1:30 Because of God you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God. In Christ we are put right with God, and have been made holy, and have been set free from sin.

Col 1:13 God has freed us from the power of darkness, and he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Titus 2:14 He gave himself for us so he might pay the price to free us from all evil and to make us pure people who belong only to him-- people who are always wanting to do good deeds.

Heb 9:12 Christ entered the Most Holy Place only once--and for all time. He did not take with him the blood of goats and calves. His sacrifice was his own blood, and by it he set us free from sin forever.

Rev 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

Although We Are Free, We Are To Do What Is Right To Stay Free

Like a person who has just been freed from prison needs to avoid crime, as believers we need to avoid again becoming entangled in perpetual habitual sin, or we will once again be in bondage to sin. When God frees us from a problem in our life and we intentionally go back to it, it is even more difficult to become free from it again. In the back of our minds we know that we failed to keep on with our freedom

and it is difficult to start again. It is similar to being on a diet and losing some weight and then going on an eating binge and gaining it all back. Once that happens it is hard to get the incentive to diet and exercise again and get back to where we were. It is the same with sin. If the Lord delivers us from some bad habit or character flaw, such as anger or greed or over drinking or drug addiction or over smoking and we go back to it again, it is even worse to quit again the next time around. So, once we are free we need to stay free. We won't lose our salvation by falling into sin, as some teach, but we will lose our ability to be an effective witness for Christ, which is Satan's will for us, and we will lose rewards at the judgment seat of Christ for all of the good that we could have done but didn't do because we were too busy being entangled in sin.

Rom 6:18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Gal 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.

Matt 12:43-45 "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.

Jesus Is The One Who Sets Us Free

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Death (Spiritual and Physical) Frees Us From Sin

We need to consider ourselves dead to sin in a spiritual sense in this life and at the same time know that eventually physical death will completely free our bodies of flesh us from sin.

Rom 6:7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Rom 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Do Not Be Deceived By People Who Would Lead You Again Into the Spiritual Bondage of Law Keeping for Salvation

Gal 2:4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

Gal 3:1-3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

After obtaining salvation by grace we should of course avoid sin as much as possible but we must never think that our deeds are now keeping us saved. Some false teachers would have us believe that yes, Christ paid for all of our sins up until the day we were saved but after that day we must keep the law to continue to be saved. This only leads us into bondage and depression when we find that we still are not capable of perfectly keeping the law in our flesh in thought, word and deed. This leads us into depression and then we are an ineffective witness for Christ. This is Satan's desire for us, to render us a useless Christian as far as spreading the gospel goes. What a terrible religion that is, to go from misery to greater misery. Our motive

for serving God and doing good is gratitude for our salvation, never to earn it by our works.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

Habakuk 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Galatians 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

If Satan failed to keep us from believing the gospel and being saved then his next step is to try to render us ineffective Christians. Don't be fooled by works-righteousness people that Satan places across your path. Our salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by works lest anyone boast of earning their own salvation on the judgment day.

Do What Is Right To Be Free From Fear

Prov 11:6 Doing right brings freedom to honest people, but those who are not trustworthy will be caught by their own desires

Rom 13:3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

Use Your Freedom Wisely

1 Cor 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. One of my former pastors explained the meaning of this verse one time in a sermon and the explanation stuck with me. In a nutshell he said, that though he was free to drink a beer while cutting the grass, he would not do so, nor would he ever drink again, not because it was a sin for him to have an occasional beer or a glass of fine wine with his wife while enjoying fine dining at a fancy restaurant. His reason for not ever drinking again was this; that due to the fact that some members of the congregation were battling alcohol addiction, and some had not drunk in years but were always on the edge of being tempted to have a drink, he did not want to be a stumbling block to them with his freedom. If one of the congregation who had the problem were to see him in the yard cooking out on the grill and drinking a beer they might say in their minds, if the pastor can have a few beers then why can't I? The difference being that because of their problem, they can't have just a few, after one drink they drink until they get drunk and may even go on a binge that lasts for weeks months or even years. For this reason he gave up alcohol altogether, for the good of others. Now I'm not saying that we all have to do that. But, if God has promoted a person to a position of leadership in the church or if one aspires to become a leader then they should be a good example for everyone who looks up to them. To whom much is given, much is required. The higher the position the greater the responsibility before man and before God.

Luke 12:48 From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded. And from the one trusted with much, much more will be

expected.

Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

Eph 5:18 Do not be drunk with wine, which will ruin you, but be filled with the Spirit.

If a weak brother or sister with a drinking problem were to get drunk due to his (the pastors) influence then they would be falling into sin because of his actions, and he did not want that to be the case. To do so would not be following the law of love toward the brothers and sisters in Christ.

Gal 5:13 My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do what pleases your sinful self. Serve each other with love.

We Should Live Holy Lives Out Of Respect For God

Rom 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

2 Cor 7:1 Dear friends, we have these promises from God, so we should make ourselves pure--free from anything that makes body or soul unclean.

We should try to become holy in the way we live, because we respect God.

1 Pet 2:16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

Total Freedom From Sin Will Not Come Until Christ Returns

Eph 4:30 And do not make the Holy Spirit sad. (grieve) The Spirit is God's proof that you belong to him. God gave you the Spirit to show that God will make you free when the final day comes.

Rom 8:21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We Can Rejoice Now In The Fact That Our Future Will Be Happy

Isa 25:9 In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

Isa 26:19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

Isa 35:6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Isa 35:10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Again, It Is A New Testament Command To Be Full Of Joy

John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

1 Thess 5:16 Be joyful always;

1 John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Phil 3:1 My brothers and sisters, be full of joy in the Lord.

Phil 4:4 Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy.

How Can We Express Our Joy, happiness and Freedom?

We have seen in the previous sections that it is indeed God's will for us to be happy, joyous and free. How then can we express our feelings in this regard?

We can begin by making a joyful noise to the Lord!

We don't have to be famous gospel singers to make a joyful noise to the Lord. It is not required that we have a certain level of skill to praise our God, with singing. As long as it is a joyful sound that is all that is required. Were that not the case many of us would have to keep totally silent in the churches because we are not all blessed with natural musical and vocal talent. Some of us, such as myself, can't carry a tune in a bushel basket. But, God doesn't care about the tone of our voice or the tune we carry, only about the attitude of our hearts, and we can praise him for that.

Psa 100:1 A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

Psa 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

Psa 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Singing Is A Sign Of Joy

Psa 33:1 Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.

Psa 68:4 Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds -- his name is the LORD-- and rejoice before him.

Psa 81:1 Sing for joy to God, our strength; shout out loud to the God of Jacob.

Psa 100:2 Serve the LORD with joy; come before him with singing.

Psa 132:16 I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints will ever sing for joy.

Psa 149:5 Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.

Isa 65:14 My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts,

We Should Begin Our Day With Rejoicing In God's Unfailing Love

Psa 90:14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Psa 118:24 This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Praise Is A Trait of Joyfulness

Psa 89:15 Happy are the people who know how to praise you. LORD, let them live in the light of your presence.

Shouting Can Be A Sign Of Joy

Psa 98:4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

Psa 47:5 God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

Psa 132:9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

The famous song "Shout to the Lord" (Written by Darlene Zschech) should have more meaning to us when we know it is biblically based.

Shout to the Lord

Darlene Zschech during a time of extreme financial and personal trouble sat down at her piano and started singing Psalms 96 to 100. In 20 minutes she says the song "Shout to the Lord" was born. Months later when she sang it at church for the first time during the offering the people began praising God and worshipping God. She had not expected any such thing to happen. Before she even had a chance to record and publish the song it was being sung around the world by churches and people who had heard it on cassette tape ministry or gotten the words and melody from friends who had got it from people at Hills church.

The Holy Spirit had taken the song around the world in a manner that even the best music producer in the world could not have done.

Darlene's problems at that time were solved by praising God with music and singing of the psalms.

Now, lest you think that one victory lasts forever that is not the case, nor was it the case even with Jesus.

Luke 4:14 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

When we climb one mountain we may have an easy path downhill for a time but be assured Satan will show up again at the bottom of the mountain and an uphill battle will begin again. This is the normal Christian life but we can rejoice that we know what is coming and are

spiritually prepared for it.

Some years later Satan attacked Mrs. Zschech again, this time with cancer. Although she believed in God's power to heal, if it was his will that her time on earth was completed she was willing to accept that also. However, she was healed by the Lord and even her doctor called it a "miracle,"

To hear her own testimony on this subject and also to hear the song "Shout to the Lord" please visit the websites below. Also read psalms 96 through 100 to see how the song began.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20kP79XJox4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qkNthzidLE>

Express Your Happiness By Singing And Shouting For Joy

Psa 33:3 Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.

To those of you who have musical talent the bible commands you to play skillfully while worshipping the Lord.

Psa 71:23 I will shout for joy when I sing praises to you. You have saved me.

Trees, Seas, Rivers, Mountains, Heaven and Earth Sing For Joy

Everything will praise the Lord when Jesus returns. When the Lord reigns in heaven and on earth even the objects that are now inanimate will rejoice, the heavens, the earth, mountains, the trees, the rivers and seas, and perhaps even the stones. So then, seeing that this is to be the case we may as well get into the habit of praising Him now.

1 Chr 16:31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them

say among the nations, "The LORD reigns

1 Chr 16:32-33 Let the sea and everything in it shout; let the fields and everything in them rejoice. Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD. They will sing because he is coming to judge the world.

Psa 66:1 Everything on earth, shout with joy to God!

Psa 96:11-12 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;

Psa 98:4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Psa 98:5-9 make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn-- shout for joy before the LORD, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

Isa 44:23 Sing for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done this; shout aloud, O earth beneath. Burst into song, you mountains, you forests and all your trees, for the LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel.

Isa 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the LORD comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Isa 55:12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

The Angels Also Have Joy And Shout And Sing

Job 38:7 NCV while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted with joy?

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Heb 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

Even The Lord Rejoices With Singing

If God rejoices over us, the saved with singing then surely we should follow his example and do the same for Him.

Zep 3:17 The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

We Should Rejoice Because God is Righteous

Even if we have nothing else in our lives to be joyful about we can still rejoice because our God is righteous and that someday everything will work out for our good if we are saved. Just think how horrible it would be if the all powerful supreme being, the most powerful being in the universe were Satan. In that case we would have nothing but misery to look forward to for all eternity because Satan loves to see human beings in misery. This is so because it seems that God created us (human beings) to replace Satan and his angels as masters of the

earth after Satan's fall, and he (Satan) is full of jealousy and envy over us and wants us all destroyed. Praise God that through Jesus Christ Satan has been defeated and we are on the road to eternal happiness, even if we have not arrived at the end of our journey yet, it is not far away for any of us. The oldest living person on the earth at any given time is about 125 years old, so none of us who are saved are more than 125 minus our age from total happiness, joyfulness and freedom.

Psa 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.

Psa 89:16 They rejoice in your name all day long; they exult in your righteousness.

Psa 144:15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.

Isa 30:18 The LORD wants to show his mercy to you. He wants to rise and comfort you. The LORD is a fair God, and everyone who waits for his help will be happy.

Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Suffering For Jesus Brings Joy

At the present time, at least in the United States we really don't have to do much suffering for Jesus. We may have a little social embarrassment sometimes but at least it is still legal to go to and worship in a Christian Church. But, the time is coming in the near future during the tribulation period or perhaps even before it when that may not be the case. It may not be legal at that time to be a Christian. Enjoy the freedom we have now and mentally prepare yourself for the time when we may have to meet in secret to study God's word together, and suffer for it if we are caught. Some churches and people

may even have their property confiscated as was happening during the early days of the church.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the meeting full of joy because they were given the honor of suffering disgrace for Jesus.

1 Pet 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1 Pet 4:13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Heb 10:34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

1 Th 1:6 And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.

Be Happy, Because Jesus Is Coming Soon And Our Rewards Are With Him

1 Pet 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Rev 1:3 Happy is the one who reads the words of God's message, and happy are the people who hear this message and do what is written in it. The time is near when all of this will happen.

Luke 14:15 One of those at the table with Jesus heard these things and said to him, "Happy are the people who will share in the meal in God's kingdom."

We have a joyful wedding to attend in the future, and it is ours. All of

the saved will be attending "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb" where Christ will formalize our future with both He and the Father forever throughout all eternity.

Rev 19:7-9 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

If we had not even one more reason to be joyful we surely have this, that someday we will be spiritually married to our savior Jesus Christ.

Rev 22:12 "Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring my reward with me, and I will repay each one of you for what you have done.

Conclusion: Making Difficult Choices Easy

We have shown in this work God intends for us to be happy, joyous, and free, and that we can determine his will for us by following the path that leads us to that destination. The true test of determining God's will for our lives is in the long term, eternity. This is the test of determining God's will. Ask yourself when facing a decision, will this thing I want to do increase my happiness throughout eternity? Will it be something I will be proud of when I stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Will he (Christ) say to me, "Well Done Thou Good and faithful servant" because I did it? If yes, do it. If no, don't do it. If undecided, pray about it some more.

Mat 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

A good rule of thumb is that when faced with difficult choices and seeking to do God's will then use the principle of doing whatever is

best for being a good witness for Christ and promoting the great commission as the deciding factor. It may not really matter what color car we drive or what type of furniture we buy but when deciding on who to date or marry, whether or not to marry at all, what school to attend, what job to take, where to live, what church to serve in, and any major spiritual decision, the thought of “what is best for my being a good witness for Christ” can help clarify the situation and make a decision easier.

And remember, God really does want us to be happy, Joyous, and Free, both in this life, and in the life to come.

Chapter 9: The Day of the Lord & the Return of Jesus Christ

The Day Of The Lord

The time period known as the "Day of the Lord" is the heavenly Sabbath, the beginning of the seventh one thousand year day. It is the time when Christ returns and sets up his kingdom. When the "Day of the Lord" is near, the people of the world will be filled with terror.

Isaiah 13:6-8 "Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame."

When the day of the Lord is near the mighty men of the Earth will be in pain like a woman in labor. There will be physical pain because of the sores they received for taking the mark of the beast. They will also be in mental anguish because they know that the wrath of God has begun to come upon them, and there is no hope for escape.

Isaiah 13:9-13 See, the day of the LORD is coming; a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the Earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.

Zechariah 13:8 & 14:3 & 5 In the whole land, declares the LORD, two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the

day of battle. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

The Lord will destroy two thirds of the people of the Earth with the seven last plagues. This is in addition to the one fourth and one third of the people who were killed during the seven seals and the seven trumpet judgments.

Isaiah 24:1 & 5-6 & 19-20 See, the LORD is going to lay waste the Earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants. The Earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the Earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore Earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left. The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the Earth shake. The Earth is broken up, the Earth is split asunder, the Earth is thoroughly shaken. The Earth reels like a drunkard,...

Many of the Earth's inhabitants will be burned up, and there will be very few people left alive after God finishes pouring out his wrath on the Earth. Isaiah says that the Earth will suffer cataclysmic events which will leave it reeling like a drunkard. It appears that some cataclysmic event will occur just before the return of Christ that will knock the Earth off of its axis and cause this effect.

To the remnant of Israel and anyone who has not taken the mark of the beast but was not taken up in the first resurrection, God has some good advice.

Isaiah 26:20 Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the Earth for their sins.

Zephaniah 2:1-3 Gather together, gather together, O shameful nation, before the appointed time arrives and that day sweeps on like chaff,

before the fierce anger of the LORD comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's wrath comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.

There will be people from all nations who did not take the mark, but were not Christians at the time of the first resurrection, and so they remained on Earth while the wrath of God was being poured out. Some of these people will survive the time of God's wrath, and remain alive to repopulate the Earth during the Millennium. If you are one of those who miss the first resurrection, take the advice given in the scriptures above, stay in your house and pray. Perhaps the Lord will let you live through his wrath and into the Millennium.

The Seventh Bowl

Revelation 16:17-21 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on Earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

Great earthquakes will strike the Earth when the seventh bowl is poured out. Notice here that the judgment God is giving Babylon is the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. This is similar to the terminology that Jeremiah used. The huge hailstones could be chunks of debris thrown into the air by the earthquake, or perhaps they will be actual giant ice chunks that have formed because of the drastic changes to the Earth's atmosphere from the previous plagues.

Heaven Exults over Babylon's Destruction

Rev 19:1-5 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! 2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

Rev 19:6-8 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Rev 19:9-10 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The Return Of Jesus Christ

Revelation 19:11-13 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one

knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

Isaiah 63:2-3 & 6 Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground."

The Lord Jesus Christ, the word who became flesh and dwelt among us, will return to Earth and fulfill the prophecies in Isaiah, Jude, and Revelation. He needs no help to accomplish these tasks, but we will accompany him and be witnesses of his power.

Revelation 19:14-16 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Christ will return to Earth with the armies of heaven following him. This army includes both the angels, and the saints, (the church) and the saved of all ages who were raised from the dead at the first resurrection. The angels of God and the demons who were released from the river Euphrates have gathered the armies of the world to Armageddon. They did the gathering, but now Christ will do the treading and will crush the armies of the world in the winepress of God's wrath.

Revelation 19:17-18 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great."

Another feast for the birds. They had a big one about a decade earlier and now another one. They will have yet a third one at the end of the millennium. God must like feeding the birds. Every year in the fall, the birds of prey from Europe and Russia migrate to Africa. At least seven hundred thousand of them fly over Israel each year. The feast of the tabernacles, which signifies the return of Christ, is celebrated in October, the same time of the year when the buzzards, the storks, and other large birds of prey fly over Israel. The saved will have celebrated with Christ in heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Now the Lord will provide a great supper for the birds, at the return of Jesus Christ. If there are still any Israelites who doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, they will doubt no more after the Lord destroys the armies of the world that have gathered in Israel.

Revelation 19:19-21 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the Earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the False Prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire. The birds will enjoy much feasting and celebration before they continue on with their journey to Africa. The armies of the Antichrist will be killed with the sword of the spirit that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apparently after defeating his enemies Christ will dismount and descend from the sky unto the mount of olives, fulfilling the prophecy that he would return to Earth in the same manner as when he left.

Acts 1:10-12 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

Zechariah 14:1-5 & 12-16 A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem.

The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected-- great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps. Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

Satan Bound 1000 Years

Rev 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having

the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 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.

Chapter 10: The Millennium and the Last Judgment

Some may ask, why does there even need to be a millennium, a time of 1000 years of peace with some people still living in normal human bodies after the return of Christ? And the answer is: Because God promised it to his people in the old testament and he cannot lie. He made great and wonderful promises of a kingdom on earth to the patriarch's and He (God) must keep them in order to be true to Himself.

The millennial scriptures are the reason why certain religious groups that often knock on doors are so confused about life on earth after Christ's return. The problem is that they do not differentiate between what will happen during the first one thousand years after Christ's return and the rest of eternity afterwards. They mix all the promises together and come up with something resembling a kettle of soup made from months worth of various leftovers. They have not rightly divided the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The millennium will include the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel concerning the "Feast of the Tabernacles."

Deut 16:13 Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. The feast of the tabernacles that God commanded the Israelites to celebrate was to take place after the harvest had been gathered and the grapes had been crushed in the winepress.

Deuteronomy 16:14 & 15 Be joyful at your Feast--you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all

your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

Deuteronomy 14:24-26 But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice.

Oh my. How did some denominations forget to delete this from the bible. People using their tithes to buy fermented drink? Sacrilege! Not that I encourage partaking of alcoholic drinks, but saying that every time the bible mentions wine it means grape juice is just silly. Wine means wine. Even in the new testament how could people be getting drunk on grape juice?

1 Corinthians 11:21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

The bible does not recommend alcohol use or being drunk. Ephesians says to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not drunk with wine. My only point here is that I don't want people lying to me about what the bible really says. If they lie about one thing how can I believe anything they say?

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

It was to be a joyful feast celebrating the bountiful harvest that the Lord had given his people for all the work of their hands. It is comparable to our holiday called "thanksgiving."

The feast of the tabernacles is a prophetic picture of the time when God will make his dwelling place with men and it will be celebrated

every year for a thousand years during the Millennium.

Zechariah 14:16-19 Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the Earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain.

The first fulfillment of this feast was when God took on a tent or tabernacle of human flesh at the birth of Christ. Christ came the first time as a suffering servant. The next fulfillment will be when Christ returns to Earth as the Lord of Lords, and the king of kings, and rules and reigns on the Earth. The saved of all ages will live and reign with Christ for 1000 years.

2 Timothy 2:11-12 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;

Revelation 20:4-6 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

The placement of these verses in chapter twenty concerning the first resurrection has caused confusion for some who study prophecy. This is not the first resurrection taking place after the return of Christ, nor is it a special resurrection for the tribulation saints. John is explaining to us what the saints who were raised from the dead and those who

were caught up alive to meet Christ in the air, will be doing during the Millennium. The first resurrection that will probably occur at the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the only resurrection that will take place between now and the end of the one thousand year Sabbath day.

There are only two resurrections mentioned in the bible left to occur before eternity begins. some try to say there are more but they have no proof texts at all. Of course God has not told us everything he has planned but to conjure something up without any proof whatsoever and to make it a part of church doctrine is as silly as saying that wine means grape juice.

The first resurrection is the rapture that occurs to rescue God's people before his wrath is poured out on the world and then after the millennium the resurrection of the lost of all ages and those who were saved and died during the millennium. That is why the bible says "blessed are those who take part in the first resurrection."

Rev 20:5-6 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Everyone who has died before the return of Christ and who will reign with Him during the millennium will have been raised from the dead at the first resurrection, not is some secret resurrection for just a few special people as some teach.

The parable that Jesus told about the man of noble birth who gave his servants money to invest in his absence pertains to Christ, who returned to the right hand of the father and left the gospel in the hands of his servants. Those who are found faithful in using their gifts for the good of God's kingdom will be rewarded during the Millennium. They will receive the higher ranking positions in the Lords kingdom.

Luke 19:12-21 He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' ""Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.' "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.' "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' ""Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!" "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me.'"

It is important to use the gifts one has for God's purposes. The indication here is that faith without works is not real faith at all, and that those who are not using the gifts that they have been given are in danger of being numbered with the wicked.

Psalms 84:10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

It is better to be a doorkeeper in God's kingdom than to be cast into the lake of fire with the wicked. For this reason we all need to make sure that we are on the narrow path that leads to eternal life, and not the broad road that leads to destruction.

As I said before some may not understand why God will have a Millennium before eternity begins. The purpose of the Millennium is to fulfill the promises he made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. God promised these men a literal kingdom on Earth with one of their descendants sitting on a throne and ruling over the world. Christ will fulfill these promises when he rules the world from Jerusalem for a thousand years.

Isaiah 2:1-4 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

When the Millennium begins the people will do the reverse of what they did when they were preparing to fight with Christ at Armageddon. Now they will beat their swords into plowshares and there will be no more war for a thousand years. The prophet Micah also prophesied about this time period.

Micah 4:3-4 They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them

afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.

The phrase "under his own vine and fig tree" in the bible means that men will enjoy the fruits of their own labors. The results of their work will not be stolen from them by thieves or taken from them by governments and taxes or by greedy owners or corporations.

Isaiah 65:19-25 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

It appears that during the Millennium the world will revert to an agricultural society. People will again live to great ages as they did before the flood. Mankind will be at peace with each other and with nature, as it was before Adam sinned.

The Final Rebellion And The Last Judgment

Revelation 20:7-8 "When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the Earth--Gog and Magog--to gather them for battle."

After the heavenly Sabbath is over Satan will be released to test those

who have been born during the Millennium. Notice that the terms Gog and Magog are used again to represent all of the leaders, nations and people who hate living under the rule of Jesus Christ.

As incredible as it seems, there will be billions of people who hate living under the peaceful rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan will incite them to rebel against the Lord, and history and prophecy will repeat themselves. What happened more than one thousand years earlier will happen again. Satan will gather people from all nations to Jerusalem to make war on the Lord Jesus Christ. The result will be the same as it was one thousand years earlier, they will all be destroyed by fire.

Revelation 20:9-10 They marched across the breadth of the Earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the False Prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Satan will meet his final end in the lake of fire that was prepared for him and his angels. The Antichrist and the False Prophet have already been there being tormented for a thousand years and will remain there forever.

The Last Judgment

Now that the final rebellion of Satan is over, the judgment of all mankind will occur. Those who were raised at the first resurrection have already received their rewards and will not be affected by this judgment.

They will be judges and spectators at this event, and perhaps even participants in judging the fallen angels.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 Do you not know that the saints will judge the

world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

Revelation 20:5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.)

Revelation 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

Matthew 25:41 KJV Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

This will be the time for the judgment of the all of the wicked who have ever lived. The only people at this judgment who will join us in God's kingdom are those who were saved and died during the Millennium. During the millennium people will live a long time but nowhere does it say that they will live more than a thousand years or even close to it. Some will die and it is likely that some of them who die will be saved.

The majority of the people being judged here will be destined for the lake of fire because all of the saints who lived during the first six thousand years of history were already raised from the dead at the first resurrection one thousand years earlier.

Revelation 21:7-8 KJV He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the

lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

After the last judgment there will be no more death. everyone will have their new spiritual bodies.

Revelation 20:14-15 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Hell is the temporary abode of the dead until the time of the last judgment. After that, both hell and those who are lost, will be cast into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the eternal prison for Satan, his angels, the demons, and all of those humans who have rejected God during their lifetimes. They will all be banished from the presence of the Lord forever.

Chapter 11: Eternity

Eternity

Rev 21:1 "Then I saw a new heaven and a new Earth, for the first heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea."

Isaiah 65:17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new Earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind."

2 Peter 3:10-14 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the Earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and Godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new Earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. God will create a new heaven and a new Earth, and the new Jerusalem will descend from the heavens.

Revelation 21:2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." The feast of the tabernacles will be fulfilled again, the Lord and his people will dwell together forever.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase 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 from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish

this.

According to Isaiah, Christ's kingdom will continue to increase forever. It appears that God will have other projects that he will begin after the human experiment is completed.

Luke 20:35-36 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

We will be like the angels are now, and be partners with the Lord in his new work.

Revelation 22:16-21 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" "And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Those who are trusting in Jesus Christ for their salvation can look forward to the blessed hope of his appearing, and escape the wrath of God when it is poured out upon the world.

Titus 2:13 While we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Luke 21:34-36 "Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with

dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole Earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

You too can share in the good things that God has planned for the future.

Romans 10:9-11 That if you confess 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 confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Amen And Amen, Come Lord Jesus!

Chapter 12: Salvation Opportunity & Spiritual Growth

Many times in my life I have seen people declare that they have made a decision for Christ, only to fall away later and resume their lives as if nothing had happened. Jesus talks about this in the scriptures in the parable of the sower which we will look at later.

Many people don't want a salvation experience that requires them to live a different lifestyle, they just want a magic cure for their immediate problems. Like a man hanging onto a piece of wood in the middle of the ocean begging God to send someone to rescue him and if God does so he will surely serve him for the rest of his life. If God does send help the man may breathe a sigh of relief upon reaching land and head for the nearest bar and relate his tale to the patrons there saying, wow, that was a close call. He soon forgets the promises he made to God and resumes his life as it was before his ordeal. He was not truly saved, Just in a jam that no human could help him out of so he called on God in desperation. It is not desperation that saves us, it is true commitment to serve the Lord from that point on for the rest of ones life.

A person who has truly given their life to Christ will never take it back. Their life now belongs to Jesus and he may do with their life whatever he pleases be it good or bad. It as if a person signs over their car title to a friend or relative and that person does not take good care of the vehicle. The person who gave the car away may decide that they want the car back because it is not being kept in tip top shape, but they cannot get it back. The title has changed hands and it cannot be retrieved.

In a sense it is the same with one who has truly given their life to Christ. If one has 100% given their life to Christ no matter what the future holds they will not be able to get it back from the Lord. These are those who are truly saved.

John 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and

no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Romans 10:9 NLT 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.

You can talk to God right now. Tell him you believe the verse above and ask him to save you. Then tell someone else about it. That's it.

Then begin studying the bible, fellowship with other believers and tell some more people about the hope you have in Christ. Make up your mind that this is a life-long thing, not just a temporary band aid until you get out of whatever mess you are in. Keep your faith until your last breath and you will be saved.

Christianity is Simple, but Not Always Easy

This is a true story. We had a lady in our church who had appeared to serve the Lord faithfully for about 5 years. She was an active member and so was her husband who was a successful businessman. At that time I was filling in for the church secretary who had taken another job. The lady called and wanted to schedule a meeting with the pastor. The meeting was scheduled and I was there in the building when it commenced. (but not in the room where it took place)

She said "Pastor, you failed me and God failed me. My husband has went back to drinking and we are getting divorced. She proceeded to tell how she had made a deal with God that she would be a Christian as long as her husband didn't drink and her marriage was intact. None of us knew of this for the five years she served in the church as a faithful member, an industrious church worker.

As the pastor and I talked about it later he explained to me that this was an example of a person not giving their life over to Christ 100%. She had held back on total commitment making a requirement in her mind that God must hold her marriage together or she would

renounce Christianity.

We cannot make deals with God. We have no bargaining chips. God holds all the cards and he is the dealer. Our only hope is to give our lives to him 100% and come hell or high water trust in him to make it turn out well in the end. He will do that by and by, but life will not always be a bowl of peaches and cream just because we have decided to follow Jesus. It has been truly said "Christianity is simple but it is not easy." When we choose to follow Christ we agree to go down whatever path he chooses for our life. We don't quit because the road is unpaved and bumpy and it is a dark and rainy night. We press on to the end knowing it will all be worth it when we stand before Jesus and hear the words, Well done!

Matt 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

It is people who have not made a full commitment to Christ that have caused the "eternal security" controversy. We see people who at one time made a commitment to Christ and then later drop all pretense of being a Christian and as human beings we hope they are still saved.

One who has truly given their life to Christ will endure to the end of their life as a Christian because God will keep them in his hand. When we have truly received the Holy Spirit as the seal and earnest of our inheritance we will not fall away permanently. Of course most of us backslide in our works at some time during our life, but even if we fall into sin we never forget about God in our heart of hearts and eventually with the Lord's disciplining of us we return to the sheepfold or God takes us out of the world because we are being a bad witness. But through it all we do not deny Christ, we only lament our evil ways and wish we could get back to clean living and walking close to the Lord.

Matt 10:32-33 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him

will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Again, it is one thing to fall into sin, sin is not the real issue, Christ paid for it all. The issue is confessing belief in Christ before other people and never denying him throughout the entire course of our life.

Salvation In the Modern Church World Today

We have over the centuries arrived at a definition of "What must I do to be saved?," that is not biblical. That false doctrine is sometimes called "Easy Believism." That doctrine basically teaches that only intellectual assent to the fact that Jesus existed, died on the cross for the sins of mankind, and rose again are necessary for salvation. While all those things are true and are necessary that is not the whole story.

James 2:9 KJV 2000 You believe that there is one God; you do well: the demons also believe, and tremble.

More than just intellectual assent is required for salvation. Action will follow true belief. The demons also believe everything about Jesus, but they are not saved nor can they be.

An example would be a person who believed that there was a sure fire way to invest \$100.00 in something and the return would be \$10,000.00 in thirty days. Would they just talk about it for the rest of their life or do it ASAP and then over and over and over for the rest of their life? Of course, most of us would take that action to make the \$100.00 investment even if we had to borrow it and then once the first \$10,000.00 was made we would never have to borrow again but just reinvest \$100.00 of our profits each time. True belief would result in action when it comes to making money.

That begs the question, in our conversion, have we believed enough in Jesus to make some changes to our lifestyle? He promises that

whatever we do for him we will receive one hundred times as much later, which is the same thing as investing \$100.00 and receiving back \$10,000.00. Do we really believe that or is it just a fairy tale to us? This is not just about money here and now, it is happiness forever with the Lord which no amount of money can buy. It is worth far more than one hundred times earthly dollars.

We really do receive it in this life also although not always in visible wealth. Being sold out for Christ leads into a peace that passes all understanding HERE and NOW!

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Mark 10:28-30 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

James 2:20 & 26 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Spiritual Growth

What is required is true repentance after hearing the gospel and

believing it. True belief always results in a change in a person. That does not mean a person stops everything that they are doing wrong instantly and starts doing everything right, but what will change instantly is their desire to want to do something about it. (bad behavior) Their attitude will change immediately followed by a change for the better in behavior as time goes on.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

A truly converted person will have a new attitude instantly (but not necessarily performance) because they have become a new creature in Christ. The Holy Spirit enlightens our minds and leads and guides us into all truth after true conversion.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 14:23-26 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

That new attitude results in true repentance which involves action going forward, not just empty words. As the old saying states "Talk is Cheap."

Luke 3:3) And he (John the Baptist) came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

Luke 3:7-9 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Parable of Two Sons

Matt 21:28-31“But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ 29“And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. 30“The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go. 31“Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.”

The examples from scripture that we have looked at show that repentance is not simply believing something or saying something, but it involves action after belief.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

After hearing Peter's sermon those who were truly converted did something. They were baptized publicly as soon as possible to show the world that they were now followers of Jesus Christ.

Godly Sorrow

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

There is a difference between godly sorrow and the sorrow of this world. Godly sorrow is when we are truly sorry for our sins because we now understand that they are offensive to God. Worldly sorrow is when we are sorry we got caught doing something wrong and are now suffering for it. A person in prison may be sorry they got caught stealing but this sorrow has no part in salvation. A rich man may be sorry his wife found out about his mistress and now is taking half of everything he owns but likewise this sorrow over losing money does not help one bit toward salvation and avoiding hell unless it eventually leads to true repentance. Being sorry we got caught doing something wrong is not repentance. We can only truly repent when God sends his Holy Spirit to enable us to do so by enlightening our minds to understand what to do. Esau wanted to repent but could not after he had sinned by selling his birthright. When God gives us an opportunity to be saved we had better take it right away because we may not get another chance before our death.

John 6:17 & 44 For ye know how that afterward, when he (Esau) would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

2 Cor 6:2 NIV For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Times of Refreshing Follow Salvation

Acts 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

As you read through the new testament you will find that a time of joy follows salvation. True salvation is followed by true happiness, not a sour bad outlook on life. The Holy Spirit gives new life to those who

are truly "Born Again." It is God's will that all should come to repentance and be saved.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Joy in Heaven

There is joy in heaven over every sinner who repents and is saved. If you have not done so already would you do so now?

Luke 15:7&10 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 10Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

If you truly believe that Jesus died for your sins, rose again and will return you are almost there. As we have read, true repentance resulting in Salvation is followed by action. Pray and ask God to forgive you of all of your sins and ask him to make you into the kind of person HE wants you to be. Then follow the leading of the Holy Spirit working in your heart and mind to guide you into all truth and into God's will for your life.

1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

According to 1 John 3:2-3 everyone who truly has the hope of being with Jesus Christ throughout all eternity purifies himself. He does not wait for a bolt of lightning to strike in front of him as a sign from God to begin housecleaning his lifestyle. As we follow God and serve him he will direct our paths, but we must move our spiritual legs in a sense to

walk on the path.

Proverbs 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Psalms 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

The Parable of the Sower

1-9 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. 3Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Matthew 13:10-The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.

Matthew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Matthew 13:18"Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown

in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

So, we all need to put ourselves into one of the categories that Jesus describes in this parable. It appears that the first two examples are of people who are not really saved. Eternal security folks will dispute this and say that for certain the 2nd person was saved because he made a public profession at some point in his life. I don't have the answer to that, it is above my pay grade as they say in the military, but I would certainly not want to bet my own salvation on it, would you?

The third person in the parable of the sower seems to have grasped and accepted the gospel but never does much with it due to more concern for the things of this world than the things of the things after this life.

1 Corinthians 3:15 KJV If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Cor 3:15 NLT But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

It appears that a person who believes but never does too much for the Lord in this life will make it into heaven and escape the Lake of Fire, but just barely. He won't have much treasure laid up for all eternity when he gets there either. Do we really want to be like that? Like someone hanging on to the caboose on the train to heaven?

Of course it is better to be a doorkeeper in heaven than to be cast into the Lake of Fire, but why settle for that when so much more is available to us and it is the Lord's desire that we acquire it?

Psalm 84:10 NLT For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

So then, let us press on and be all that God wants us to be, not all that we can be of our own volition. Our attitude needs to be "Lord, use me for whatever purpose you choose." By having that attitude the Lord will indeed use us because he is always looking for willing workers to harvest his field.

Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

If we labor for the master (God) in this life we will surely have a great reward in his kingdom.

Rev 22:12 KJV & WEB And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

"Behold, I come quickly. My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work.