

## What is the Last Sign Preceding Christ's Return?

By R. J. Adams 2017

I heard a sermon a few weeks ago where the preacher said that we are not waiting for "the last person to be saved" (as many have taught) before the return of Christ but "for the last martyr to die". He used the following verse to prove his point.

*Rev 6:9-11 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*

The martyrs above are anxiously awaiting the judgment of God to come upon those who murdered them. That judgment, is called the "wrath of God" in other places in the scriptures. It is the pouring out of the seven vials or bowls of God's wrath as described in Revelation.

*Rev 6:12-17 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

That judgment ends with the return of Christ who will destroy the armies of the world gathered to Armageddon to make war with him.

God's people will be spared from his wrath by some means. (and there is more than just one way that can be done, but that's another story, to read about it click on "2018", The first Resurrection)

*1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain*

*salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*Rev 16:12-16 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 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. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*

So, his (the preachers) point was that the return of Christ is not being held back so much by waiting for the last person or persons who will be saved before Christ's return but on the last people who will be martyred. (killed for their faith and testimony of Jesus Christ)

We pretty much know who the last persons will be that will be martyred during the tribulation, during the reign of Antichrist. They will be the two witnesses of Revelation.

The Lord required in the Law of Moses that no one should be put to death except by the testimony of two eyewitnesses. He lives by his own law. He will not pour out his wrath on the world until two witnesses have announced to the world that it is near at hand and that those who are wise have opportunity to make preparations to escape it by turning to Jesus Christ for salvation.

*Deuteronomy 17:6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Even in the old testament God always sent at least two different prophets to Israel to warn them of impending judgment. The Israelites rarely ever listened though and usually suffered the consequences of being conquered by neighboring nations for a set time period.

*Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*

God's two witnesses will warn the world before he pours out his wrath. The testimony of the two witnesses will also be the last opportunity to be saved and spared from God's wrath before it is poured out upon the earth.

*Isa 26:20-21 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. 21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

God is speaking primarily to Israel here because of the fact that they rejected Jesus Christ and accepted the lies of Antichrist, they missed the rapture. Now they will have to suffer through the most horrible time of trouble the world has ever experienced and hope to stay alive until Christ returns.

*Rev 11:1-10 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

The two witnesses will preach, warn and do miracles to give the inhabitants of earth one last chance to be saved before God's judgment falls. The world at large will reject their message although some may believe and be saved, some of whom may be killed for their faith.

Then, when they have finished God's mission that will last for 3 ½ years God will permit them to be killed, just as Jesus was put to death after a 3 ½ year ministry. However, just like Jesus, they will rise from the dead.

They (the two witnesses) bodies will on display in Jerusalem for 3 ½ days while the world celebrates their deaths. Then an amazing thing will happen.

*Rev 11:11-13 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

The two witnesses may be the last two believers to die by martyrdom at the hands of the Antichrist and his false prophet. The world is “affrighted” the KJV says. Other translations say “filled with fear or terrified.” In any event the next judgment will arrive very quickly and before the world has recovered from their shock God's wrath will begin to be poured out. The Antichrist and his false prophet will now direct their attention to gathering the armies of the world to fight with Christ at his coming. They will be too busy with this project to worry about killing a few more believers in the Most High God. The Antichrist and the world now know for certain that Jesus will soon return and consign them to the lake of fire. They will begin to gather all available forces to Armageddon to try to prevent it from happening even though it is a hopeless cause.

*Rev 11:14-17 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*

God has let Satan and his cohorts run amok on the earth for some time now. Evil has reached it peak, it's apex. They even killed the two witnesses who had proved by their miracles that they truly were messengers from God. Now it is time for the Lord to take complete control of the things on earth. Not that he was not in control before but he was permitting people on earth to sin mightily

without full retribution until this time. Beginning next his wrath, which the believers will be spared from, will begin to come upon the earth.

*Rev 18-19 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

*Psalms 2:1-12 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

The time has now come for punishment to befall the earth while rewards will be given out to the prophets and the saints of all ages from the creation of Adam until this time. It is also called the time to destroy them that destroy the earth. See, green people, there is hope. God himself will destroy those who are destroying the earth. Neither the U.S. Government nor the United Nations will be the entity that accomplishes that task. Christ will clean up the earth after his return so you can get on with your life now and stop worrying about coal dust and trees.

## **Our God Reigns**

*Rev 19:1-6 1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: 2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and*

*the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

Although it is not quite an accomplished fact on earth yet, in heaven the Lord God omnipotent reigns. It is accomplished in the fact that finally, the culmination of the first 6000 years of mankind's woeful rule on earth is ending and the rule of Jesus Christ the "Day of the Lord, the Millennium" is about to begin.

Notice in the verse above that this is what the martyred saints at the start of this study have been waiting for, their shed blood to be avenged. They are a great multitude in heaven praising God. They most likely have just received their new bodies at the time of this scene having gone up in the first resurrection. (the rapture)

### **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

The "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" is about to begin. The saints will be celebrating and rejoicing in heaven while sinners on earth are suffering.

*Rev 11:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.*

The marriage supper of the Lamb has finally arrived. Jesus had told his disciples that he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until he did so new in his kingdom.

*Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

*Luke 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*

### **A One Year Wedding**

The marriage supper must last at least one year per the old testament scriptures

that Jesus must fulfill. Usually God keeps his word exactly. Although a wedding celebration could scripturally last more than one year. God is usually right on time though, if he says a year, a year it will most likely be, one year exactly.

*Matthew 5:16-18 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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.*

*Deut 24:5 NIV If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.*

Deut 20:7 'And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would marry her.'

Now, there is of course no danger of Jesus Christ going out to war and being killed at the battle of Armageddon but he still must fulfill the law of Moses that God gave to mankind to fulfill all righteousness. He said and did the same when he was baptized by John the Baptist.

*Matt 3:13-15 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.*

So, Jesus must celebrate with his bride for at least one year before he goes out battle and destroys the armies of the world at Armageddon.

Now, if this is true then it changes the entire end times scenario to something many will not even like to consider. If the wrath of God and the marriage supper both last for one year what does that do to the tribulation timeline? What it means is that the believers will be here for six years of the last seven, just like six days in a week and then a sabbath (seventh) day of rest. It means that the "Day of the Lord" the one thousand years of Christ's rule with a rod of iron will begin at the rapture and continue for another 999 years.

The rule of Christ over the earth with that rod of iron would begin with the outpouring of God's wrath. Wow! What would that possibility do to traditional eschatology? I'm not saying that it is absolutely true but you have to consider

that scripturally it is indeed possible. It eliminates all prophetic contradictions.

### **The Faith Once Delivered Unto the Saints**

Now, I know that many people have not been taught that the end times will unfold in such an order but this is similar to what was being taught while the apostles were still alive and shortly thereafter. We know that true doctrine and teaching were delivered to the saints at that time because the scriptures tell us so.

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

*Jude 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.*

It seems better to follow the teachings of the early church, the first one hundred to 200 years rather than rely on doctrines newly invented and taught from the 1850's onward. The early church's doctrine was pure, it became corrupted by 300-500 AD and began to be restored in the 1500's, the time of the reformation. We are still recovering it today. It will be pure again when the two witnesses preach it. If we are here when the two witnesses start preaching we will absolutely know true doctrine at that time if we are willing to accept it.

Some denominations and cults teach that no one was saved during the so called "dark ages" when biblical knowledge was limited to what people heard from the priests as most could not read and even if they could they had no bibles since the printing press had not yet been invented.

*Matthew 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

People who unwittingly teach false doctrine can still be saved, but they will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. The cults who teach that no one after 200 AD was saved until the 1850's (when they came on the scene) are totally wrong.

*Luke 12:48 For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

To whom much is given, much is required. The reverse is also true, to whom little is given, little is required. God will judge fairly according to opportunity not according to accomplishment. We can never compare ourselves to other people, like snowflakes, we are all different.

Now, before we continue on to the actual return of Christ to earth we will look at what was taught in the early church about the two witnesses and the second coming from both the bible and other documents that were written early in the church age but are not scripture. What they show us is what was taught at the beginning of the Church age.

### **The Two Witnesses**

*Zechariah 4:11 & 13-14 Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?" He replied, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my Lord," I said. So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the Earth."*

*Revelation 11:3-6 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the Earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the Earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.*

God is going to send his two witnesses to preach to the world and to warn mankind to repent, and to stand against the Antichrist. They have power to work miracles by the Spirit of the Lord.

*Zechariah 4:3-6 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my Lord?" He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my Lord," I replied. So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.' says the LORD Almighty.*

The commonly quoted verse above, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit," is actually a reference to the power God will give to his two witnesses during the tribulation period. These two witnesses will most likely be the two men in the bible who have never died, Enoch and Elijah.

## Enoch

*Genesis 5:21-24 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 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.*

*Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.*

Enoch was the first person in the bible who was given the opportunity to see heaven without first experiencing death.

## Elijah

*1 Kings 17:1 "Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, 'As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word.'"*

*James 5:17-18 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the Earth produced its crops.*

Elijah prayed that there would be no rain in Israel for 3 1/2 years, and God answered his prayer. Elijah will still have this power when God sends him back to Earth to withstand the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

*1 Kings 18:36-39 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD--he is God! The LORD--he is God!"*

*2 Kings 1:9-10 Then he (The King) sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'" Elijah answered the*

captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

In times past, God gave Elijah the power to withhold the rain and call down fire from heaven to win back the hearts of some of the people of Israel. Elijah will still have these abilities when he returns during the reign of Antichrist.

Malachi 4:5-6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

2 Kings 2:1 & 11 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Elijah was the second person in the bible to temporarily escape death and see heaven before he died. The Jews have been waiting for him to return and announce the coming of the Messiah for almost 2400 years. Devout Jews set a plate for Elijah every year at the Passover meal. The Two Witnesses will appear on the world scene in some future year in the spring, about the time of the Passover. We know they will appear in the spring because their ministry will last for 3 1/2 years, and it will end in the fall, near the time of the feast of the trumpets. It will end at that time because it will be time for the fall harvest festival when the earth is reaped.

Rev 14:12-16 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. 14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

The earth was reaped of the saved before the wrath of God is to be poured out upon the wicked. They (those who were symbolically harvested) will be spared from God's wrath. Not so for the wicked. They will be deceived by the Antichrist,

the false prophet and the three demons who went out to deceive the whole world and draw the armies of the earth to Armageddon where they will be symbolically crushed in the winepress of God's wrath.

*Rev 14:17-20 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

There has been some discussion among prophecy students over the years as to whether the two witnesses might be someone other than Enoch and Elijah.

*Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*

Neither Enoch or Elijah has ever died, and they do not belong to the sign of the fig tree generation, the people who have been promised that some of them will live to see the coming of the Lord. Therefore, they both must return and die at the hand of the Antichrist before the first resurrection can take place. The early church writers were all in agreement that the two witnesses would be Enoch and Elijah.

The Apocalypse of Peter

Verily I say unto you, when the twigs have sprouted forth in the last days, then shall false christs arise and arouse false hopes, saying: I am the Christ, that has now come into the world. But, this deceiver is not the Christ. And those who reject him he shall slay with the sword, and there shall be many martyrs. Enoch and Elijah shall be sent to teach them that this is the Deceiver, which must come into the world, and do signs and wonders to deceive. And therefore, those who die by his hand shall be martyrs, and shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life."

The Gospel of Bartholomew (Greek Text)

"And Satan said: Look carefully at who it is that is coming down, for it is Elijah, or Enoch, or one of the prophets that this man seems to be. But he answered and said: Not yet are the six thousand years accomplished, for the sum of the number is in my hands."

## The Gospel of Nicodemus 20:1-4

"Then the Lord after his resurrection, delivered the saints to Michael the archangel; and he led them into paradise. And two very ancient men met them and were asked by the saints, who are you, who have not been with us in Sheol, and have had your bodies placed in Paradise? One of them answering said, I am Enoch, who was translated by the word of God: and this man who is with me, is Elijah the Tishbite, who was translated in a fiery chariot. Here we have been, and have not tasted death, but we are now about to return at the coming of Antichrist, being armed with divine signs and miracles, to engage with him in battle, and to be slain by him at Jerusalem, and to be taken up alive again into the clouds, after three days and a half."

## The Apocalypse Of Elijah

Paraphrased From The Apocalypse of Elijah

Then when you hear that there is security in Jerusalem, tear your garments O priests of the land, because the Son of Perdition will soon come. In those days the Lawless One will appear in the holy places. He will say to the sun, "fall," and it will fall. he will say, "shine," and it will do it. He will say, "darken," and it will do it. He will say to the moon, "become bloody," and it will do it. He will go forth with them from the sky. he will walk upon the sea and the rivers as upon dry land. He will cause the lame to walk, he will cause the deaf to hear, he will cause the dumb to speak. he will cause the blind to see, the lepers he will cleanse. The ill he will heal, the demons he will cast out. He will multiply his signs and his wonders in the presence of everyone. He will do the works which Christ did, except for the raising of the dead alone. In this you will know that he is the Son of Lawlessness, because he is unable to give life.

When Enoch and Elijah hear that the shameless one has revealed himself in the Holy Places they will come down and fight with him saying, are you indeed not ashamed? You have been hostile to those who belong to heaven. You have acted against those belonging to the Earth. You have been hostile to the thrones. You have acted against the angels. You are always a stranger. You have fallen from heaven like the morning stars. You were changed and your nature became dark. But you are not ashamed when you stand firmly against God. You are a devil. The Shameless One will hear and he will be angry, and he will fight with them in the market place of the great city. He will spend seven days fighting with them and they will spend three and one half days in the market place dead, while all the people see them. Then they will rise up and they will scold him saying, "O Shameless One, O Son of Lawlessness, Are you indeed not ashamed of yourself since you are leading astray the people of God? Do you not know that we live in the Lord. On that day they will shout up to

heaven as they shine, and all the world will see them.

The Son of Lawlessness will persecute the saints and the priests, but Christ will pity those who are his own. He will send from heaven his angels, and the sound will move heaven and Earth when they give praise and glorify. Now those upon whose forehead the name of Christ is written and upon whose hand is the seal, both the small and the great, will be taken up upon their wings and lifted up before his wrath. Then Gabriel and Uriel will lead them into the Holy Land. They will eat from the tree of life. They will wear white garments, they will not thirst. The angels will watch over them and the Son of Lawlessness will not be able to prevail over them. Then sinners will groan upon the Earth saying, what have you done to us O Son of Lawlessness, saying I am the Christ when you are a devil. You are unable to save yourself, so how can you save us? Woe to us because we listened to you.

In the time when these documents were written (50-300 AD) the common belief was that the Two Witnesses who would withstand the Antichrist and later be slain by him, would be Enoch and Elijah. Once again, these are not scripture but simply the writings of people who lived at the beginning of the church age.

When the Antichrist and those in agreement with him have killed the Two Witnesses, the world will celebrate, thinking that they have won a great victory. Three and one half days later the first resurrection will occur and take the Two Witnesses and the saints out of the world. Then God will pour out his wrath upon the Earth. During this time of wrath being poured out, the church, the bride of Christ, will be in heaven celebrating the marriage supper of the Lamb. They will return with him one year later and watch him destroy the armies of the world at Armageddon.

Note: according to some ancient documents there will be a short delay between the raising of the Two Witnesses and the catching away of the living believers, so we can still never know the day or the hour.

### **The Didache Chapter 16. Watchfulness; the Coming of the Lord.**

Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come. But come together often, seeking the things which are befitting to your souls: for the whole time of your faith will not profit you, if you are not made perfect in the last time. For in the last days false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate; for when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute and betray one

another, and then shall appear the world-deceiver as Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall do iniquitous things which have never yet come to pass since the beginning. Then shall the creation of men come into the fire of trial, and many shall be made to stumble and shall perish; but those who endure in their faith shall be saved from under the curse itself. And then shall appear the signs of the truth: first, the sign of an outspreading in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet. And third, the resurrection of the dead -- yet not of all, but as it is said: "The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him." Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

The fact that the early church believed that saints of God would be translated just after the two witnesses is not absolute proof that this is correct but it does make all scripture fit together without contradiction. One other thing, it would show that in the going up in the resurrection "the last would be first last." The two last people to die, the two witnesses would go up first, followed by all of the dead saints from all ages and then the saints living at that time. Although the Lord could raise everyone, both living and dead in a moment of time he will apparently not do so because then we could calculate the day and the hour. Some have estimated that it will be anywhere between three and forty days after the two witnesses go up before the first resurrection (rapture) will be totally completed.

### Resurrection Verses

*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. 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 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. 18Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

*1 Thess 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day*

*should overtake you as a thief. 5Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

*Titus 2 :11-14 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

*Rev 20:4-6 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. 5 **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.***

After the first resurrection (the rapture) the rest of the dead will not be raised until 1000 years later. Now it is clear that the believers who are raised at this time will be the saints who will rule and reign with Christ for one thousand years. That is how we know that this is the rapture.

If the rapture occurred seven years or more before the death of the martyrs during the tribulation neither they nor the two witnesses could participate in the marriage supper or ruling for one thousand years because they would not receive their new bodies for another thousand years. Although some may think that is OK, it does not seem probable that God would leave some of his most faithful people, those who gave their lives for the testimony of Jesus during the most horrible time on earth, out of the one time festivities of Christs wedding supper for the saints of all ages. Not only that but the scriptures are clear that those who die during the tribulation will be included in that great company of believers who return with Christ at his coming. It is clear from the verses below that those who die during the tribulation will be with the Lord before the one thousand year millennium ends and the rest of the dead are raised.

*Rev 7:9-14 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their*

hands; 10And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. 13And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Will only seven years worth of martyred believers in the 6000 year history of the world be totally left out and only raised in time to see the wicked cast into the lake of fire at the last judgment after the millennium is over? It does not seem like God would do such a thing to his people. What is seven short years to God when a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day.

*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 Return of Jesus Christ**

*And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18That ye may eat*

*the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

The unbelievers on earth are also invited to participate in a supper, however they themselves are the meal for the birds.

*Rev 20:1-3 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*

*Rev 20:7-15 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

**The Roman Empire Holds Back the Antichrist**

Many people have been taught that it is the Church being in the world full of the Holy Spirit that is holding back the revealing of the Antichrist. The theory is that the rapture must take place before the man of Sin, the Son of Perdition can come to power because the Holy Spirit must be taken out of the world by the removal of all believers in whom he resides. This theory then says that after the rapture the Holy Spirit will no longer indwell believers but will come upon them externally (as opposed to internally) as it was in the Old Testament.

That is quite a theory designed to support the necessity of the Church being removed from the world before the book of Revelation begins to be fulfilled, of at least anything beyond chapter four.

The problem with this theory is that there is not one word to support it in the scriptures and it was never taught at any time in the history of the Church until modern times.

### **Descriptions of Antichrist and his Kingdom From the Bible**

*Dan 8:6-8) 6After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*

*Dan 7:21-22 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; 22Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

This little horn in Daniel is the Antichrist. He conquers three countries as one of his first acts upon coming to power and then begins to persecute the true saints of God. He wants all worship directed to himself and not the Most High God.

*Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

The saints will be persecuted by Antichrist for 3 ½ years. (a year, plus two years plus a half a year is a time, times and a half a time)

*Dan 7:36-37 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.*

He will claim to be the highest God and the messiah. God will permit him to do so to bring evil to it's final conclusion. Those who reject Jesus Christ will be voluntarily deceived by the Antichrist.

*Dan 12:1-4 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: 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. 2And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:1-4)*

Daniel does not fully separate the two resurrections by 1000 years as Revelation does but he hints at it by showing that first those who have everlasting life are raised and then he points out that some will be raised to everlasting shame and contempt.

Daniel's prophecies were written hundreds of years before the Revelation to John. Revelation just gives us more details. They are in agreement and use many of the same analogies to represent the events of the end times. Again, this shows the contiguous inspiration of God in giving us his Word.

*Rev 13:5-9 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty- two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation*

*of the world. 9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Chapter 13 of Revelation gives us a lot of information about both the Antichrist and the False Prophet. There has been much discussion among prophecy students during the last century as to what or who has been restraining the Antichrist from coming to power. We will study that from the viewpoint of Paul's writings to the Thessalonians. Notice that only those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life will worship the beast. In some places the scripture may say things like "the whole world wondered after the beast" but we must make the exception that there will be saved people who refuse to worship the Antichrist. God has revealed this exception to us. So, undoubtedly there will be believers living on the earth during this time period besides the 144,000 sealed to live through the tribulation.

In 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2 Paul was confronted by a heresy that was circulating at the time he was writing his letters to the Thessalonians. The heresy was that the rapture had already take place and that all believers in Christ who were still on the earth had missed it and were already in the tribulation period, including Paul and those who were preaching the false doctrine namely a man called Hymenaeus. It is not hard to see why some thought that they were already in the "Great Tribulation" at that time. The Roman emperors were killing Christians. Nero was accusing Christians of burning Rome when he had himself ordered the fire to be set so he could rebuild the city more to his liking. It was open season on Christians. Many thought Nero was the Antichrist. Even after his death many thought he would come back to life and fulfill the prophecies in Revelation about the Antichrist returning to life after a fatal wound.

"In 64 AD, much of Rome was destroyed in the Great Fire of Rome, which many Romans believed Nero himself had started in order to clear land for his planned palatial complex, the Domus Aurea. He is infamously known as the Emperor who "fiddled while Rome burned". He was rumored to have had captured Christians, dipped them in oil, and then set them on fire in his garden at night as a source of light. (From Wikipedia / Nero)"

It was not only Nero who was persecuting the Christians but also the Jews and those gentiles (Greeks) whose livelihoods were threatened by the exposure of false Gods, cutting into their business ventures.

*Acts 19:24-28 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made*

*silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; 25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. 26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. 28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

Many were the every day trials of the early Christians. Some could barely make a living because they had to remain in hiding in caves and catacombs or be killed. No wonder some believed it when Hymenaeus and his cohorts Alexander and Philetus said that they were already living in the tribulation period.

*1 Tim 1:18-20 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

*2 Tim 2:16-17 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 **Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already;** and overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

The word "canker" is translated as gangrene or cancer in modern English translations. The meaning is that it is a disease that spreads rapidly having disastrous effects. That is the effect of false doctrine. Paul was battling this false doctrine as he was writing to the Thessalonians. Lets read from the scriptures and view Paul's response to heresy. As we do let's remember what the doctrinal question is that Paul is answering: "Has the rapture already taken place?" His answers show us today what must happen before the first resurrection comes to pass.

### **The Man of Lawlessness**

*2 Thess 2:1-2 KJV 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.*

*2 Thess 2:1-2 NIV) 1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come.*

I have included both the KJV and NIV translations to make things a little more clear. It is easy to see he begins by talking about “our gathering together to him” which is the rapture. As if that is not enough he makes it clear by saying that some are teaching that the “Day of the Lord” which begins with the tribulation period and the seven seals was already happening or about to happen because the first resurrection was past.

*2 Thess 2:3-5 KJV 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 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. 5Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

*2 Thess 2:3-5 NIV Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, **for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.** 4He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, **so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.** (2 Thess 2:3-5)*

Paul then seems to be saying that before either the rapture or the tribulation occurs there will come a falling away, translated rebellion in the NIV and then the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) will be revealed. When you understand the falsehood that Paul was battling it presents an interpretation of his answer that is the exact opposite of how we have understood this scripture in modern times.

Now some at that time believed Nero Caesar to be the Antichrist but Paul was explaining to them that in order for someone to proven to be the man of sin he must sit in the temple of God and proclaim himself to be God. Until that happens the Antichrist cannot be identified and therefore the tribulation and the rapture cannot take place. It the “abomination of desolation” that actually starts the

“great tribulation” period. Jesus gave us clarity about that.

We misunderstand because we have not considered what question Paul was responding to. What Paul actually appears to be saying is “Don't worry about missing the rapture because it cannot happen until after the Antichrist has been revealed and committed the Abomination of Desolation.” We have taken it for many years to mean that the Church will be gone before the Antichrist is revealed, but it may be that Paul is saying the exact opposite. Again, he seems to be saying to the Church, “don't even worry about the rapture until after the Antichrist is revealed.” At least that is what it looks like to me in plain English. Of course, everyone is entitled to their own opinion. I am just trying to take it literally as it is written without twisting the interpretation to fit recent (1850's until today) prophetic interpretations)

Also remember when Paul was writing his letters to the Thessalonians the temple was still standing . It was not destroyed until about 70 A.D. Paul was writing in about 52- 60 Ad., 10 or 20 years before it's destruction. So, at that time it was at least possible for Nero or someone else to go inside the temple and declare himself to be God if the restrainer was taken out of the way. After 70 A.D. It was no longer possible for the “Abomination of Desolation” to take place until the temple is rebuilt. That is something to watch for. We have made other mistakes also with interpreting the verses that follow this because of our misinterpretation of the preceding verse. This has caused great confusion to prophecy students. Lets continue with the scriptures.

### **The Withholder**

*2 Thess 2:5-7 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 **And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.** 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 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: 5 Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6**And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.** 7For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*

Paul, having taught these people in the past in person, when he was with them he was absolutely certain that they knew exactly what he was talking about. Now for us in our day to come up with a new answer to a question that the answer was clearly understood in the first century A.D. when Paul was

preaching puts us in the position of misinterpreting the Word of God. So, that begs the question, what did the Thessalonians and the early church know and believe it meant?

Again, Paul was sure that they understood him. Also remember that if the restrainer was the church or the Holy Spirit Paul could have said so plainly. He probably used evasive language so as not to expose those sharing his writings to even more persecution from the Romans by predicting the demise of their empire. That type of doctrine would have made Christians traitors deserving of death for that crime also. They would be guilty of double felonies, being a Christian and despising Roman Gods, and being one who was predicting the end of the Roman Empire.

Part of the reason for our confusion is that in modern times we have come to believe that it is the Church that is holding back the Antichrist. The bible does not say that, in fact it is not clear who "He" is without understanding the historical record. Is the restrainer Michael the Archangel, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church or something else. Some have surmised that it was just not time yet or as some during the reformation believed, "God is not willing that any should perish" so he is waiting for the last person to be saved. At any rate until we are 100% sure who is specifically holding back the the Antichrist we cannot make a dogma from verse 5. Now, the Early Church Fathers had an opinion and it is presented below. It may be different from any theory you have ever heard or read about.

### **The Early Church Fathers on the Timing of the Rise of Antichrist**

Paul clearly and distinctly tells us that he knew, and that the Thessalonians knew, what that hindrance was, and that it was then in existence. The early Church, through the writings of the Fathers, tells us what it knew upon the subject, and with remarkable unanimity affirms that this "let," or hindrance, was the Roman Empire as governed by the Caesars; that while the Caesars held imperial power, it was impossible for the predicted antichrist to arise, and that on the fall of the Caesars and the two legs of Daniel he would arise.

Here we have a point on which Paul affirms the existence of knowledge in the Christian Church. The early Church knew, he says, what this hindrance was. The early Church tells us what it did know upon the subject, and no one in these days can be in a position to contradict its testimony as to what Paul had, by word of mouth only, told the Thessalonians. It is a point on which ancient tradition alone can have any authority. Modern speculation is positively impertinent on such a subject. <http://biblelight.net/fathers-on-antichrist.htm>

The Antichrist could not come to power as long as Rome was in power. Rome controlled Jerusalem and the entire holy land. Until the Roman empire ceased to control Israel, Antichrist could not be revealed as he would have to be subject to the Roman Caesar and not a world dictator in his own right. The early Church came to this conclusion from the bible, not from their own reckoning or interpretation. They took Daniel chapter two literally as we probably should. Let's look at what Daniel wrote.

*Daniel 2:36-45 “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. 37Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 38in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. 39“After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. 40Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. 41Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. 42As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 43And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. 44 “ In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. 45This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. “ The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”*

The early church believed that the iron kingdom, the Roman Empire must be reduced to the ten toes of Iron and clay before Antichrist was to be revealed. This also agrees with the book of Revelation that ten kings of the remains of the Roman empire (which included much more than Rome and Europe, it also included the holy land, Northern Africa and Western Asia) will come under Antichrist's dominion and he will eventually control most of the rest of the world later in his reign. Here are some examples of the beliefs of early church writers. I have only included a few for brevity but there are many more. Visit the reference websites for more information.

1 As to the "let" or hindrance to the manifestation of the "man of sin " referred to in 2 Thess. ii., "We have the consenting testimony of the early Fathers, from Irenaeus, the disciple of the disciple of St. John, down to Chrysostom and Jerome, to the effect that it was understood to be the imperial power ruling and residing at Rome." — " Horae Apocalyptica;," vol. iii., p. 92.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130-202) John and Daniel have predicted the dissolution and desolation of the Roman Empire, which shall precede the end of the world and the eternal Kingdom of Christ. The Gnostics are refuted, those tools of Satan, who invent another Father different from the Creator. 1. In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, ...

Tertullian (2nd-3rd Century) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hinders must hinder, until he be taken out of the way. **What obstacle is there but the Roman state,** the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, **shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)?** "And then shall be revealed the wicked one, 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, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Source: <http://newadvent.org/fathers/0301.htm>

Hippolytus (3rd Century) TREATISE ON CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST. 25. Then he says: "A fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; it had iron teeth and claws of brass." **And who are these but the Romans?** which (kingdom) is meant by the iron--the kingdom which is now established; for the legs of that (image) were of iron. And after this, what remains, beloved, but the toes of the feet of the image, in which part is iron and part clay, mixed together? **And mystically by the toes of the feet he meant the kings who are to arise from among them;** as Daniel also says (in the words), "I considered the beast, and lo there were ten horns behind it, among which shall rise another (horn), an offshoot, and shall pluck up by the roots the three (that were) before it." And under this was signified none other than Antichrist, who is also himself to raise the kingdom of the Jews. He says that three horns are plucked up by the root by him, viz., the three kings of Egypt, and Libya, and Ethiopia, whom he cuts off in the array of battle. And he, after gaining terrible power over all, being nevertheless a tyrant, shall stir up tribulation and persecution against men, exalting himself against them. For Daniel says: "I considered the horn, and behold that horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, till the beast was slain and perished, and its

body was given to the burning of fire." Source:  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0516.htm>

So then, if we are going to accept the original interpretation of Paul's writing to the Thessalonians then we must conclude that it was believed that the Roman Empire was the restraining force that was holding back the revealing of Antichrist in Paul's day. However, even if the Roman Empire is the restrainer is the that holds back the Antichrist, that does not absolutely mean that the rapture of the church cannot take place before the Antichrist is revealed. There is a possibility that Paul was not speaking to the church at all in these verses but only to Israel. If that were the case it would not matter one way or the other who the restrainer is, if these verses have absolutely nothing to do with the church. Paul did in fact have a controversy with the Jews in Thessaloniki. Could he have meant the verses pertaining to the Antichrist only for Israelites who will be here during the tribulation?

*Acts 17:1-4 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.*

You can't have it both ways though. If he was speaking only to the Jews why not say so? Why would this information even be in the new testament which the Jews neither read or believe. If the Christians will all be gone before Antichrist comes to power why would Paul even be writing about it to refute the false teachers. Rather than go on with his complex explanation he could have said, don't worry about that end times persecution stuff, it's only for the Jews who reject Christ and miss the rapture and suffer through the tribulation.

It seems clear then that if these verses are written to the gentile church then the rapture cannot take place until after Antichrist is revealed. Since they were written to the Thessalonians, the Greek church it seems clear it was not meant only for Jews residing in Greece but for all believers. If the Thessalonian letters pertain only to Israel during the tribulation then it does not make any difference whatsoever as to the timing of the rapture as far as the gentile church age is concerned.

Historically what happened (pertaining to the restrainer) is that the Turkish

Ottoman empire replaced the Roman empire as controllers of Jerusalem for about 900 years until World War I. The Roman Empire consisted of two legs of iron, not just one. The rulership came from both Rome and from Turkey, the city of Constantinople. (Istanbul) When the power of the Western capital of the empire, Rome deteriorated, the Eastern Capital became stronger. That is part of what the crusades were about, civil war between the two capitals of the Roman empire. The Ottoman Turks controlled Constantinople and the complete Holy Land until the British took over at the time of World War I. So, in effect the Roman Empire, the left leg of it, is still preventing the Antichrist from coming to power today.

*Matt 24:15-21) When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 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.*

*Mark 13:10-14 **And the gospel must first be published among all nations.** 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. 12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; **and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.** 13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:*

However, even though the British and Americans divided up the Holy Land, the Moslems, the remains of the Eastern Leg of the Roman Empire still control the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. The remains of the Roman Empire still to this day prevent the Antichrist from coming to power because he cannot commit the Abomination of Desolation until the temple is rebuilt and it cannot be rebuilt as long as the Moslems, and the remnant of the Eastern Turkish leg control the Temple Mount.

*2 Thessalonians 2:8-11 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the*

*Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*

In 1948 Israel declared Independence and once again became a nation. However, even so, they did not control Jerusalem. Not until 1967 during the “Six Day War” did they recapture it. Although Israel recaptured Jerusalem even now Moslem buildings still sit on the Temple mount and though the Israeli's control the area surrounding the temple site, they cannot rebuild the temple as long as the Moslems are in control. Someday these Moslem buildings will be destroyed, probably due to the war described in Ezekiel 37. When that happens the temple can be rebuilt and the Antichrist can be revealed soon afterward.

As of 2017 the only thing stopping the Antichrist from being revealed is the absence of a Jewish temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. When the temple is built he can be revealed. When he commits the Abomination of Desolation, we will know he is the Son of Perdition. When that happens, look up!

## **Temple Tax Returns for Jews Worldwide February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

“After 2,000 years, the Temple tax is returning for all Jews worldwide. Israel’s Sanhedrin, the ancient high court that recently was reborn, has announced not only the resumption of the half-shekel per person per year tax, but procedures so that that Jews around the globe can participate.”

Exodus 30:11-16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. 13This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. 14Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. 16And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel,

and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

It may not be as far away as we might think. Recently in the news it was reported that a "Temple Tax" of ½ of a shekel or about \$4.00 per person per year is going to be voluntarily collected from all Jews willing to participate. Since there are about 12 million Jews in the world even if only 20% participate, it won't be long before all the money necessary to rebuild the temple is collected. Millions of dollars could be collected in a few years. And remember, the temple is not that big of a building. Not counting the outer courts the total interior was less than 4000 sq. ft. Professional athletes build homes that large today for only a few million dollars. As soon as it is politically possible to do so the temple will be rebuilt in a short time. I have seen fast food restaurants appear as if by magic in about 30 days to 6 weeks. When the temple is standing we can begin watching for Antichrist to appear on the world scene.

*Luke 21:7 -19 "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" 8He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. 9When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." 10Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. 12"But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13And so you will bear testimony to me. 14But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. 16You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17Everyone will hate you because of me. 18But not a hair of your head will perish. 19Stand firm, and you will win life.*

*Luke 21:20-25 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations.*

Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 25“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

### **More Antichrist Identifiers**

*Zechariah 11:17 Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.*

The early church believed that after Antichrist's assassination attempt and phony resurrection he would still bear the marks of the sword wound in his body, a withered arm and a blind right eye. There are many other opinions. One is that it represents the return of the Roman Empire or one of the other of the kingdoms represented in Daniel's statue returning to power. It could easily represent more than one thing. Jesus still had the scars in his hands and feet after his resurrection and it appears that Satan will imitate that feature in his Antichrist.

*Rev13:13-18 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.*

Every great leaders and most famous people have a spokesperson or a press secretary. The Antichrist will be no different. Even our God uses angels, usually Gabriel, to announce his plans. In Revelation 16:13 the Antichrist's spokesman is called “The False Prophet.” It is the false prophet who will force men to worship the Antichrist and take his mark. He will also perform great signs and wonders in opposition to those mighty works of the “Two Witnesses.”

On the subject of the “mark of the beast” it has been calculated that an 18 digit number (three sixes) would have trillions of combinations. Our U.S. Social security number has nine digits and is sufficient to give all of our citizens and foreign workers and individual number for years to come. If an 18 digit number were used like 666666-555555-444444 every person in the world could be assigned a unique one. Even with 666 prefixing every one there would be enough combinations to assign a unique one to every person on the planet. The method of using that number could be a computer chip with the number encoded and placed under the skin to be scanned, similar to the technology currently being used to identify pets. Of course, the possibilities are almost endless when it comes to this subject as to the manner of it being placed on a person. It could be a tattoo, perhaps one that is only visible under black light. However, it is almost certain that some type of unique numbering system will be used as Antichrist desires to monitor every transaction in the world for the purpose of obtaining worship and most likely as a tax collection device.

It would not be surprising if Antichrist, claiming to be God, demands a ten percent tax, the tithe to fund his world program. The mark would enable him to collect that money. Satan is an imitator of God and will most likely demand tithes be paid to himself through Antichrist. He could claim to be the rightful receiver of the tithes and in doing so drive many churches out of existence. Remember, these taxes will be in addition to all federal, state and local taxes that are now being collected. Antichrist will probably attempt to steal all of God's tithes. Also notice that there are three ways to complete financial transactions, by taking the mark, or by having the name of the beast or the number of his name. We do not understand exactly what this means today but the generation alive at that time will no doubt understand it. Technology is advancing so rapidly it may be impossible to understand it today. New inventions may relegate today's computers to the scrap heap.

### **The Unholy Trinity**

Satan as we have seen is the great imitator. He desires to be God and to be worshipped as God. What Christians call the Godhead, The Father, The Son and the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) is imitated by Satan with his imperfect and evil trinity. Satan's imitation is Himself as God the Father, the Antichrist in place of the Son Jesus Christ, and the false prophet in place of the Holy Spirit. Another identifying characteristic of Antichrist's reign is that during his rulership he will seek to change times and laws.

*Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall*

*wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

Remember, Antichrist will come into power promising "peace and prosperity." (Have we heard that before from our politicians?) There are people in this world today who already believe that we should do away with the seven day week that God has implemented. They would like to replace it with a "more efficient" in a sense "metric system" ten day week. People would work seven days and have three days off. Everyone would have a different three days off so commerce and production would never stop. Business would go on seven (ten) days a week. Antichrist would promote this as a way of increasing production of food and goods and as a means to worldwide prosperity.

*Genesis 2:2-3 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

*Exodus 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

*Exodus 35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.*

It would be just like Satan to seek to cause the Jews to lose track of the Sabbath and for Christians not to be able to worship on Sunday. After a few months it would be difficult to even figure out when Sunday was, and then it would be just another work day. You would have to call in sick to go to church, and how long would you keep your job doing that? It is bad enough now that many businesses are open on Sunday and that prevents people from hearing God's word being preached. Just think how scrambled things would be if we went to a ten day week? How could we obey God's command to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy?" Satan seeks to destroy every last vestige of God's commands. No doubt the sabbath day will not be the only thing He (Satan) seeks to confuse or destroy. There will be other times and laws he seeks to overturn. Some may even come into effect in certain countries long before Antichrist comes to power. Keep watch. In seeking to change laws we can be almost sure that it pertains to God's laws, most likely one or all of the major biblical laws, the ten commandments.

The final summary of the matter is not that this is being presented as an absolute true interpretation of end times prophecies. But, for the moment

anyway it seems to be the only one that allows all verses of scripture to be taken at face value without twisting them into some unrecognizable meaning without having any contradictions. This study is simply food for thought to those seeking truth.

## **My Denominational History**

You may be wondering about my church affiliations. I was brought up Lutheran and taught that there were no more visible signs that would be exhibited before the return of Christ. At some unknown day in the future after the last person to be saved was saved Christ would return, raise all of the dead, sort them out at the judgment and they would be assigned to heaven or hell. Then eternity would begin. That's plenty to know for salvation purposes but not enough for someone who really desires to study end times prophecy.

In my mid twenties I became a Baptist and learned about the pre-tribulation rapture and Scofield and Larkin's teaching on the end times scenario. I held to that firmly for many years. The Baptist's had some great teaching but after awhile they seemed to me to sound like a broken record. No one even wanted to look into other possible end times interpretations of the scriptures, completely content with the status quo explanations.

Later after much study and reading about the end times and trying to make every bible verse about as yet unfulfilled prophecy fit into a scenario where none contradicted another I became disillusioned with the traditional explanation. I sought out a church where a little more freedom was allowed concerning prophetic interpretation. I found out that The Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee) and many other non denominational churches permitted believers a wide latitude in understanding end times biblical prophecy. I am now a member of the Church of God denomination where I may believe prophecy as I understand it with out being shown the left foot of fellowship. (Being booted out of the door)

### **Declaration of Faith**

The Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee) believes the whole Bible to be completely and equally inspired and that it is the written Word of God. The Church of God has adopted the following Declaration of Faith as its standard and official expression of its doctrine. (Only that pertaining to prophecy is shown)

“We Believe: “In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to

reign on the earth a thousand years.” “In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.”

Many people do not know the difference between pre-millennial and pre-tribulational. The former means that the resurrection of the righteous will occur at some time before the one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on earth. The second (very simply) means that the resurrection of the righteous will occur seven years before the return of Christ and before the Antichrist comes to power.

A pre-millennial doctrinal statement gives bible students a lot of latitude in interpretation of biblical predictions that have not yet occurred. Since we will not know all of the details of an event before it happens it would seem that this is the best policy, a broad statement of faith that allows for differing opinions on things that are not salvation issues. Of course, we must always stand firm on the doctrine that was taught early in the church age. The Apostles creed pretty much sums up everything needful for salvation.

#### The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholic (Christian) Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.

If we hold to these tenets of faith we do well.

#### *Romans 10:9-10*

*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. 10For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*