

## The Word Of God - Lesson VI A

### The Church

#### Introduction

God established New Testament churches to be a vital part of the life of the believer. It is therefore important for believers to have a proper understanding about what a New Testament Church is and its function.

In order for a church to call itself a church in the true Biblical sense it must base its faith and practice solely on the Word of God, the Bible for the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God as we can read in:

II Timothy 3:16-17

**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

No mortal man founded the New Testament church; it was Christ who instituted the church as we can read in:

Matthew 16:18

**And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this ROCK I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.**

Please, remember that the ROCK Jesus talks about in the above verse is the Lord Himself as we can read in:

Psalm 18:2

**The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation.**

Although the church is organised and administered by an assembly of believers, the church is not their possession. It is Christ who owns the church since he bought it with His own blood as we can read in:

Acts 20:28

**.....Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood.**

#### Church Leadership

Scripture identifies two leadership positions within the local church: elders and deacons. The elder is an “overseer” of the church. Scripture refers to the local church having multiple elders. An elder is to give counsel and leadership for the church and the believers. The qualifications and duties required to serve in these positions are found in the following passages:

I Timothy 3:1-7, 11

**Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not**

given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money." He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.....

In the same way, women are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

And Titus 1:6-9

**An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless –not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.**

And I Peter 5:1-3

**To the elders among you, I (Peter) appeal as a fellow-elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.**

Men as well as women were called by God to function as overseers in accordance with their giftings. However, the Apostle Paul specifically addressed men in relation to marriage because at that time men were allowed to have more than one wife but women were not allowed to have more than one husband.

The position of deacon is one of service for those who are willing to serve the church by performing the various duties and tasks as required as we can see in:

Acts 6:1-6

**In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained about the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch. They presented these men to the Apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.**

And I Timothy 3:8-12

**Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, women are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and household well.**

Both men and women were called by God to function as deacons in accordance with their giftings. Once again, Paul specifically addressed men in relation to marriage because at that time men were allowed to have more than one wife but women were not allowed to have more than one husband.

### **Believers and the local church**

1. Believers are placed in the local church upon their baptism. They then become members of the local church according to:

Acts 2:44-47

**All believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**

2. Believers are to learn doctrine in the local church according to:

Ephesians 4:11-16

**It was He (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**

**Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ, From Him, the whole body, joined and held together, by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

3. Believers are to function in the church in accordance with their gift or gifts as we can read in:

I Corinthians 12:27-31

**Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?**

**Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.**

Paul teaches the believers here that we are all to function in one or more of the above gifts, but no one will function in all the gifts. As far as speaking in tongues are concerned, the gift of a private prayer language is for everyone who receives the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. However, in this verse Paul is talking about the public gift of speaking in tongues and not everyone will have that particular gift.

Moreover, the gifts that are given to believers are to be used in relation to the local church.

4. Believers are not to forsake the assembling of themselves together according to:

Hebrews 10:24-25

**And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

In this verse the author of Hebrews speaks of the importance of coming together as believers. He touches as well on the subject of the Day of the Lord, which is the Day of the Return of the Lord. Now, that Day has not yet happened. However, we are much nearer to that Day than these believers were. Therefore, we need to be even more prepared for that event than they were.

5. Believers are to submit to the leadership of the church.

Leaders are called of God to take care of the local assembly of believers according to:

Acts 20:17-28

**From Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church....**

**Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with His own blood.**

And Hebrews 13:17

**“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”**

And I Peter 5:2-3

**Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.**

These leaders are not to “lord” it over the assembly as Jesus taught in:

Matthew 20:25-28

**Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials lord it exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your**

**servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve....”**

Instead, they are to teach the Word of God as well as to live by the Word of God. They and the congregation alike, are to obey the Word of God so that there will be unity in the assembly.

6. Believers are to support missionaries.

God’s Word teaches that missionaries are to be supported spiritually and materially by the assembly of believers, both on an individual basis and collectively according to:

I Corinthians 16:5-6

**After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you – for I will be going through Macedonia..... Perhaps I will stay with you a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go.**

And II Corinthians 1:16

**I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.**

And Titus 3:13

**Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need.**

And III John 5-6

**Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. They have told the church about your love. You do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God.**

Missionaries were ordained and sent out by the local church according to:

Acts 13:2-3

**In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers; Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

Christ Himself commissioned His disciples and commanded them to go according to:

Matthew 28:18-20a

**Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you....”**

7. Believers have the responsibility and privilege of supporting missions and the local church according to:

Acts 11:27-29

**During this time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world (this happened during the reign of Claudius). The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.**

Paul instructed the church in Corinth regarding giving in the following manner:

II Corinthians 9:6-11

**Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanks giving to God.**

And I Corinthians 16:1-3

**Now, about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.**

Paul wrote to the Philippian church on giving as follows:

Philippians 4:10-19

**I rejoice greatly in the Lord, that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. Yet, I was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, not that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs, according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.**

8. Believers have a responsibility in helping govern the local church.

Christ, in establishing His church, instituted order and organisation by which believers would carry out His work. Government of the local church was by simple democracy under the direction of the Holy Spirit according to:

Acts 6:1-6

**In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together, and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.**

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid hands on them.

And Acts 13:1-3

**In the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaem (who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.**

And Acts 15:22

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

9. Believers who need to be disciplined are to be disciplined under the authority of the local church.

The discipline of believers because of sin is to be done by the local church according to:

Matthew 18:15-17

**If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of one or two witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.**

And I Corinthians 5:1-13

**It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not even occur among pagans. A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am**

**with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgement on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexual immoral people – not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you.**

Paul makes it very clear in this passage that the sin of one person affects all the believers of the local church and not just that one person, just as yeast affects the whole lump of dough. It is therefore extremely important to deal with any believer who lives a sinful lifestyle.

And II Thessalonians 3:6

**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.**

And Titus 3:9-11

**But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.**

In these passages Paul warns against believers who are lazy, divisive and thereby cause disharmony among the believers.

**10.** Believers who need healing are to call for the elders of the local church for prayer. The prayer for the sick was also clearly a function of the local church according to:

James 5:14-16

**Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**

All healing after Pentecost was related to the ministry of the local church and included the prayer of healing by elders. Moreover, James encouraged believers to “confess their sins” meaning to “share their faults, their weaknesses” with others so that they would be

walking in a greater measure of physical, emotional or spiritual wholeness because of the support and prayers of others. After all, as James pointed out, the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. And all believers are righteous in Christ according to:

II Corinthians 5:21

**God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.**

### **The New Testament Church has two Ordinances**

Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances given to the local church.

#### **Water Baptism**

We have the first account of water baptism in:

Acts 2:38-41

**Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."**

**With many word he warned them and he pleaded with them. "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.**

At that time three thousand people who received Christ were baptised. In doing so, they identified themselves with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ according to:

Romans 6:3

**Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ were baptised into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**

And Colossians 2:11

**In Him (Christ) you were also circumcised in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with Him in Baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him (Christ) from the dead.**

#### **The Lord's Supper**

Christ instituted the Lord's Supper the night before He died as we can read in:

Matthew 26:26-30

**While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is My body."**

**Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on**

**until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father's Kingdom.**

The Lord's Supper was a memorial act for believers. It was given to bring to remembrance Christ's suffering and death for our sins according to:

I Corinthians 11:23-26

**For I (Paul) received from the Lord what I passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way after supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.**

When believers take the Lord's Supper they show their belief in Christ's death for the remission of their sins, looking forward to the day when Christ will return. The Lord's Supper is only for believers. Moreover, believers are to examine themselves before they take part in the Lord's Supper according to:

I Corinthians 11:28-32

**A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so we will not be condemned with the world.**

The elements of the Lord's Supper, the bread and the wine are only symbolic of the body and blood of Christ. The value in taking them is in the honouring and revering of Christ for His suffering for us, and our self-examination to judge sin in our lives. The church decides how often the Lord's Supper is taken. The local church is very important to the Lord and as such is to be very important to believers as well.

Next, we will study the subjects of heaven and hell.

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## **The Word Of God – Lesson VI B**

### **Heaven And Hell**

#### **Introduction**

When God created the first man and woman He told the man that if he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die according to:

Genesis 2:15-17

**The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of**

**good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.**

Despite God's warning the first man and the first woman disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil according to:

Genesis 3:6

**When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.**

Their disobedience caused a separation between them and God, which has affected all of mankind born after them according to:

Romans 5:12

**Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.**

However, God made a way for mankind to be reconciled to Him according to:

Romans 5:18-19

**Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.**

And II Corinthians 5:21

**"God made Him (Christ) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."**

God has given us this life to accept His free offer of forgiveness of our sins according to:

Hebrews 9:27

**Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement. We must all one day die. At that time our bodies will be buried but our soul and spirit will either go to heaven or to hell.**

If we have accepted God's free offer of forgiveness because of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross, we will enter heaven and our works will be judged according to:

I Corinthians 3:10b-15

**.....But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation, using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.**

People who have not accepted God's free offer of forgiveness have chosen to be eternally separated from God. They will eventually be judged at the White Throne Judgement.

This means that at the time of death their bodies will be buried and their soul and spirit will go to hell.

Revelation 20:11-15

**Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which was the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

## Heaven

We will study the subject of heaven first of all.

### Heaven is a real place

There are several places in the Bible that refer to a "heaven". We have three "heavens". The first heaven is the sky above us. The second heaven is the outer heaven etc where the demonic realm exists and where angelic battles take place. The third heaven is the heaven where God resides.

Jesus descended from the third heaven according to:

John 6:38

**For I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me.**

Furthermore, Jesus has said that He will prepare a place for believers in the third heaven according to

John 14:2-3

**In My Father's House are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.**

Jesus has returned to the third heaven according to:

Acts 1:11

**"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."**

The Apostle Paul writes about the third heaven in:

II Corinthians 5:8

**We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.**

And II Corinthians 12:2-4

**I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know – God knows. And I know that this man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows – was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.**

And Ephesians 1:3

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

And Ephesians 1:19b-20

**That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms.**

Paul writes about the second heaven in:

Ephesians 6:12

**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

### **Believers will be glorified in heaven**

Believers actually possess eternal life the moment we receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. However, it is only fully realised after we have received our resurrected body according to:

Romans 8:18-23

**I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

And I Corinthians 15:42-44

**So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.**

And II Corinthians 4:16-17

**Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away; yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

And Colossians 3:4

**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**

### **Heaven is a place of rest**

The Apostle John writes about a rest for believers in:

Revelation 14:13

**Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes", says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them."**

This means freedom from the pressure, pain and persecution of this life. Rest does not mean to quit all activity because there will be great activity in heaven. It is not rest from activity but rest in activity.

### **Heaven is a place of knowledge and understanding**

Paul writes that we will have full knowledge and understanding of things in:

I Corinthians 13:12

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully; even as I am fully known.

### **Heaven is a place of holiness**

In heaven believers are free from the presence of sin according to:

I John 3:2

**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

### **Heaven is a place of service**

Believers will serve Christ in eternity according to:

Revelation 22:3

**No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him.**

### **Heaven is a place of worship**

John writes about worship in heaven in:

Revelation 19:1-8

**"After this I heard what sounded like a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah!**

**Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgements. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by**

her adulteries.

He has avenged on her the blood of His servants.”

And again they shouted:

“Hallelujah!”

Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

“Praise our God, all you His servants, you who fear Him, both great and small!”

Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

“Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!

For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.

Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

### Heaven is a place of community

In heaven, believers will not marry but will be in close fellowship with others according to:

Luke 20:34-36

Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection.”

John writes about a new heaven and a new earth in which God’s people will be living together according to:

Revelation 21:1-3

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and here was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

### Heaven is a place of communion with God

John reminds us that God will be among His people according to:

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

## Heaven is a place of peace

Paul writes of his longing to be in heaven with Christ according to:

Philippians 1:23-4

**I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.**

John writes in:

Revelation 21:4

**He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**

## Heaven is for ever and ever

Believers will be in heaven for eternity according to:

Matthew 25:46

**Then they will go to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life.**

John writes in:

Revelation 22:5

**There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.**

## Hell

We will next study the subject of hell.

## Hell is a real place

Hell was originally designed for Satan and his demons according to:

Matthew 25:41

**Then He (Jesus) will say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."**

And Revelation 20:10

**And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

## Hell is a place of punishment

Those who have rejected Christ will enter hell at the time of their death according to:

Matthew 5:29-30

**If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for**

**you to lose one part of your body then for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.**

And Matthew 10:28

**Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

And Matthew 18:8-9

**If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.**

And John 3:18

**Whoever believes in Him (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

And Revelation 20:11-15

**Then I saw a great white throne and Him who is seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

And Revelation 21:8

**But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.**

### **Hell is conscious torment**

Unbelievers will suffer real torment in hell according to:

Matthew 13:49-50

**This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

And Mark 9:47-48

**And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."**

And Revelation 14:9-10

**A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.**

### **Hell is eternal and irreversible**

Unbelievers enter hell which will be for ever and ever according to:

Matthew 25:41

**“Then He (Jesus) will say to those on His left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”**

And Matthew 25:46

**Then they will go to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.**

And II Thessalonians 1:8-9

**He (Jesus) will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of His power.**

And Revelation 14:11

**“And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever....”**

### **Conclusion**

Both heaven and hell are real places.

God desires for all people to spend eternity with Him and has made that possible according to:

John 3:16

**For God so loved the world that He gave His only one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

However, people who refuse to accept God’s free gift of salvation will be eternally separated from God according to:

John 3:18

**Whoever believes in Him (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because He has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.**

God does not want anyone to perish. Therefore, let us go out and share the wonderful plan of salvation with the lost, who are on their way to hell, in the hope that they too will accept God’s free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus.

In our next study we will look at the subject of the Second Coming of Christ.

## The Word Of God - Lesson VI C

### The Second Coming of Christ

#### Introduction

It is absolutely clear from the Bible that Jesus will come a second time according to:

Matthew 24:3

**As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. "Tell us," they said, when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"**

And Matthew 24:30

**At that time the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.**

And John 14:1-3

**Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust God, trust also in Me. In My Father's House are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back to take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.**

And Acts 1:11

**"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven."**

And I Thessalonians 4:16-17

**For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.**

And Revelation 1:7

**Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.**

And Revelation 19:11-16

**I (John) saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no-one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF**

## **KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

The manner of Christ's second Coming will be entirely different from the manner of His first Coming.

### **His First Coming**

Christ was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born as a Son according to:

Isaiah 7:14

**Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel.**

And Isaiah 9:6

**For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

And Matthew 1:18-25

**This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with Child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."**

**All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with Child and will give birth to a Son and they will call Him Immanuel – which means, "God with us."**

**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a Son. And he gave Him the name Jesus.**

And Luke 1:26-38

**In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin.?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is**

impossible with God.

**“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”  
Then the angel left her.**

Christ’s glory was veiled as we can read in:

Isaiah 53:2-3

**He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty of majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.**

And Matthew 13:55

**Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?**

Christ’s power was demonstrated with sign and wonders as we can read in:

Matthew 8:16-17

**When evening came, many who were daemon-possessed were brought to Him, and He drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the Prophet Isaiah: “He took out infirmities and carried our diseases.”**

The above is a reference to:

Isaiah 53:4

**Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted.**

Christ was rejected by the Jewish authorities and crucified by the Romans as we can read in:

Isaiah 53

**Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?.....**

**For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

And Daniel 9:26a

**After the sixty-two “sevens” the Anointed one will be cut off and have nothing....**

The sixty-two “sevens” refer to a period in history of 444 years. Daniel predicts that after that period Jesus would be crucified. That prediction has come true.

Christ voluntarily submitted Himself to the unjust rule of men. He did this in order to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world by dying on the Cross as we can read in:

John 10:17-18

**The reason My Father loves Me is that I lay down My life –only to take it up again. No-one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I**

received from My Father.

And Acts 4:25-28

**You spoke by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of your servant, our father David:**

**“Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.” Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against Your Holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed. They did what Your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.**

Having accomplished our redemption He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven where He will remain until the second Coming according to:

Acts 3:21

**He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets.**

All this is in fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies of the Suffering Servant Messiah.

### **The Second Coming**

Bible prophecies give a number of signs of the Second Coming of Christ.

a. There will be an increase of war, famines, plagues and earthquakes according to:

Luke 21:10-11

**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.**

b. The earth will be full of violence as “in the days of Noah” and many people will be afraid of what is going to happen according to:

Luke 17:26-27

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

This passages refers to:

Genesis 6:11-13

**Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”**

c. There will be great sexual immorality and other kinds of evil behaviour as “in the days of Lot” according to:

Luke 17:28-29

**It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.**

This passage refers to:

Genesis 18:20-22

**Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached Me. If not, I will know” The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord.**

And Genesis 19:1-24

**The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.....**

**Then the Lord God rained down burning sulphur on Sodom and Gomorrah – from the Lord out of the heavens.**

And II Timothy 3:1-5

**But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.**

d. There will be widespread pollution of the earth and destruction of the environment according to:

Isaiah 24:5

**The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.**

And Revelation 8:7-11

**The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.**

**The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died and a third of the ships were destroyed.**

**The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water – the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.**

And Revelation 16:3-4

**The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died. The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.**

e. There will be a restoration of Israel as a Jewish nation according to:

Ezekiel 36:24

**For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.**

f. There will be a conflict over Jerusalem which will involve all nations of the world according to:

Zechariah 12:2-3

**I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling, Judah will be besieged as will Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves.**

g. There will be a globalisation process which will bring nations together. An anti-Christian government will arise out of this according to:

Revelation 13

**And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.....**

**He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.**

The prophet Daniel helps us understand the prophecy of John about the beast in:

Daniel 7:23

**He gave me this explanation: The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.**

h. There will be an increase in technology and travel according to:

Daniel 12:4b

**“ .....Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”**

i. There will be false prophets who will cause confusion about God and salvation according to:

Matthew 24:5

**Jesus answered: “Watch out that no-one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many.”**

And Matthew 24:23-26

**At that time if anyone says to you, “Here is the Christ!” or, “There He is!” do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect –if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, “There He is, out in the desert,” do not go out; or, “Here He is, in the inner rooms, do not believe it.”**

j. There will be an attack on the basic truths of the Bible and opposition to those who teach the Gospel according to:

Matthew 24:10-11

**At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.**

And II Timothy 4:3-4

**For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to say. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**

And II Peter 2

**“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.....**

**Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit, and “A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.”**

k. The message of the gospel will reach all nations despite opposition and persecution according to:

Matthew 24:9, 14

**Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me.....**

**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

And Matthew 28:18-20

**Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

A literal interpretation of end time prophecy requires there to be two stages to the second Coming.

## 1. The first stage of the Lord's Second Coming

### The Rapture

The Lord will come for believers who will be caught up to meet Him in the air according to:

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

**For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.**

And I Corinthians 15:50-54

**I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: Death has been swallowed up in victory.”**

This event is called the Rapture and believers are encouraged to look for the Coming of the Lord according to:

Luke 21:36

**Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.**

And I Thessalonians 5:1-10

**Now brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting of faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep we may live together with Him.**

Believers are to be people of “the light” and of “the day” because they do not live in spiritual darkness. They are to be alert and self-controlled. Christ died for believers so that one day all believers, those who have already died or, as Paul puts it “are asleep,” and those who are still alive at the time of His coming will be with the Lord for ever.

And Titus 2:11-13

**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the Blessed Hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

Paul informs the believers as well that certain things need to take place before the Rapture according to:

II Thessalonians 2:1-3

**Concerning the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our being gathered together to Him, we ask you brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the Day of the Lord has already come. 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.**

From the above passage we learn that before believers will meet the Lord in the air two things must take place. They are as follows:

1. A great Apostasy will happen, a falling away from Biblical truth.
2. The Man of Lawlessness, the Antichrist will come on the scene.

### **The Wedding Supper**

The Apostle John describes what takes place once believers are in heaven as we can read in:

Revelation 19:7

**Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!  
For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready,  
Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”  
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints).  
Then the angel said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”**

Believers will return with the Lord to earth at His Second Coming according to:

Revelation 19:14

**The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.**

### **The Tribulation**

Another event will take place on earth before the return of the Lord, called the Tribulation, which includes a period called the Great Tribulation. Paul does not mention this event in relation to the Rapture. It is therefore very likely that this event will happen some time after the believers have been raptured.

The time of the Tribulation will last for three and a half years. Likewise the Great Tribulation which follows on from the Tribulation will last three and a half years.

God will use that period for two reasons:  
He will complete His discipline of the nation Israel.  
He will judge the unbelievers.

The Prophet Jeremiah describes God's discipline of the nation of Israel, which culminates in the seven years Tribulation, or the time of "Jacob's Trouble" in:

Jeremiah 30:7-11

**How awful that day will be. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it. "In that day," declared the Lord, "I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them. Instead, they will serve the Lord their God and David their King whom I will raise up for them. So do not fear, O Jacob my servant; do not be dismayed, O Israel," declares the Lord. "I will surely save you out of a distant place, your descendants from the land of their exile. Jacob will again have peace and security, and no-one will make him afraid. I am with you and will save you," declares the Lord. "Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you entirely go unpunished."**

The Prophet Daniel writes about the time of God's discipline for the nation of Israel in:

Daniel 9:24-27

**Seventy "sevens" are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the Ruler comes, there will be seven "sevens" and sixty-two "sevens". It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two "sevens", the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one "seven." In the middle of the "seven" he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.**

God has decreed that a total of seventy "seven" or seventy times seven years is needed to discipline the nation of Israel for their sins according to:

Deuteronomy 28:58, 64-67

**If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name – the Lord your God..... Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods –gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your feet. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!" – because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that**

**your eyes will see.**

And Deuteronomy 31:16-18

**“And the Lord said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake Me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide My face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, “Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?” And I will certainly hide My face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.”**

Daniel’s words “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” cover the first return of the Jews, an event we can read about in the Book of Nehemiah and the Book of Ezra.

Daniel’s words “the Anointed One will be cut off and have nothing” deal with the first coming of Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross.

Daniel’s words “the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary” deal with the Roman Empire during which rule Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in 70 AD.

Daniel’s words “war will continue until the end...” deal with the period we call the church age, which is the period we live in.

Daniel’s words “he will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven” speak of the covenant the antichrist will make with Israel, which will last for seven years. This period includes the three and a half years of the Tribulation and the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation. These events are still to take place.

Daniel writes as well about the time of the Tribulation in:

Daniel 12:1

**At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book – will be delivered.**

The Apostle Matthew mentions the time of the Tribulation in:

Matthew 24:21-22

**For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**

Luke writes about the Tribulation period in:

Luke 21:25-27

**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. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the earth, for the heavenly bodies will**

**be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.**

The Apostle John writes about the rule of the antichrist during the time of the Tribulation, and in particular during the Great Tribulation in:

Revelation 13:5-8

**The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven. He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose name has not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.**

And in Revelation 13:16-18

**He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.**

2. The second stage of the Lord's Second Coming

### **Armageddon**

The Lord will come to the earth with believers to deal with the nations of the earth and the antichrist when they have gathered around Jerusalem. This battle is called the battle of Armageddon. We can read of it in:

Zechariah 14:1-5

**A day of the Lord is coming when your plunder will be divided among you. I (God) will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. On that day, His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south. You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him.**

And Isaiah 2:10-21

**Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendour of His majesty.....**

**They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the dread of the Lord and the splendour of His majesty when He rises to shake the earth.**

And Acts 17:31

**For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead.**

And Jude 14-15

**“Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”**

And Revelation 6:15-17

**Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the Throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come and who can stand?”**

And Revelation 19:11-16

**I (John) saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no-one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his Name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

### **Israel's recognition of her Messiah**

At the time of the Second Coming of Christ Israel as a nation will recognise her Messiah according to:

Zechariah 12:10

**And I will pour out on the House of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on Me, the One they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son.**

### **Satan will be bound for 1000 years**

The Apostle John writes that at the return of Jesus Satan will be bound for a period of 1000 years before being released for a final time according to:

Revelation 20:1-3

**And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the keys to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the**

nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

### **The Millennial Kingdom**

At the second Coming of Christ He will rule the world from Jerusalem with a rod of iron for a period of 1000 years during which time there will be universal peace and justice on the earth according to:

Psalm 2:7-9

**I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, “You are My Son; today I have become Your Father. Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; You will dash them to pieces like pottery.**

And Isaiah 2:1-4

**“This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s Temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples, They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.**

And Isaiah 11:3-9

**“...He will not judge by what He sees with His eyes, or decides by what he sees with His ears.....  
They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.**

And Zechariah 14:9

**The Lord will be King over the whole earth. On that day, there will be one Lord, and His name the only name.**

And Zechariah 14:16

**Then the survivors of all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.**

And Daniel 7:27

**Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms of the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey Him.**

## The Final War

The Apostle John writes that Satan will be released for a final time in:

Revelation 20:7-8

**When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.**

## The Final Judgement

At the end of the 1000 years there will be a final Judgement according to:

Revelation 20:11-15

**Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

## The New Jerusalem

At that time the New Jerusalem, the City of God will come down from heaven according to:

Revelation 21:1-4

**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."**

Let us hold on to this truth in the midst of our present circumstances which may be challenging at times.

## Conclusion

Believers are not to despair at the state of the world. Instead, we are to be always on the watch and to pray that we may escape all that must happen according to:

Luke 21:34-36

**Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.**

Believers are not to try and fix the date of the second Coming for we will get it wrong.

Matthew 24:36

**No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**

And I Thessalonians 5:1-6

**Now brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well for you know that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you brothers, are not in darkness that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.**

Despite the evil in the world, believers are to continue living in the right way and be a light to the world according to:

I Thessalonians 4:9-12

**Now about brotherly love, we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all the brothers throughout Macedonia. Yet, we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependant on anybody.**

And II Thessalonians 3:6-12

**In the name of the lord Jesus Christ, we command you brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, not did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling, so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busy bodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.**

Believers are to be aware of interfaith unions promising to unite the world's religions in the cause of peace according to:

Revelation 17 and Revelation 18

..... **The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead:**

**Mystery Babylon the Great. The Mother of Prostitutes and the Abomination of the Earth. I saw that the Woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus..... ..”**

Believers are to live their lives to the glory of God, ready to meet Him at any time, and also ready to suffer for Him if called to do so according to:

Luke 21:12-19

**But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors and all on account of My name. This will result in your being witnesses to them. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. All men will hate you because of Me. But not a hair of your head will perish. By standing firm you will gain life.**

I John 3:1-3

**How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God” And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Everyone who has this hope in Him, purifies himself, just as He is pure.**

And Revelation 12:11

**“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”**

Believers are to be involved in evangelism according to:

Matthew 28:18-20

**“Then Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

Having studied the subject of the Second Coming of Christ which will enable us to be more prepared for that event, we will next study the role of the nation of Israel.

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## The Word Of God - Lesson VI D

### Israel

#### God's Covenant with Abraham

Having studied the subject of the Second Coming of Christ we will now look at the subject of Israel.

God's relationship with Israel is based on covenants. The foundation of all these covenants is the one made with Abraham, called the Abrahamic Covenant, which was an unconditional covenant according to:

Genesis 12:1-3

**The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**

And Genesis 17:7-8

**I (God) will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give you as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.**

The Promised Land has specific borders according to:

Genesis 15:18-21

**On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates – the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."**

And Numbers 34:1-12

**The Lord said to Moses, "Command the Israelites and say to them, "When you enter Canaan, that will be allotted to you as an inheritance will have these boundaries: Your southern side will include some of the Desert of Zin along the border of Edom. On the east, your southern boundary will start from the end of the Salt Sea, cross south of the Scorpion Pass, continue to Zin and go south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and over to Azmon, where it will turn, join the Wadi of Egypt and end at the Sea. Your western boundary will be the coast of the Great Sea. This will be your boundary on the west. For your northern boundary, run a line from the Great Sea to \mount Hor and from Ount Hor to Lebo Hamath. Then the boundary will go to Zedad, continue to Ziphron and end at Hazar Enan. This will be your boundary on the north. For your eastern boundary, run a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham. The boundary will go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain and continue along the slopes east of the Sea of Kinnereth. Then the boundary will go down along the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea. This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side."**

And Joshua 1:4

**Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates – all the Hittite country – to the Great Sea on the west.**

And Ezekiel 47:13-20

**This is what the sovereign Lord says: “These are the boundaries by which you are to divide the land for an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel, with two portions for Joseph. You are to divide it equally among them. Because I swore with uplifted hand to give it to your forefathers, this land will become your inheritance. This is to be the boundary of the land: On the north side it will run from the Great Sea by the Hethlon Road past Lebo Hamath to Zedad, Berothah and Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer Hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. The boundary will extend from the sea to Hazar Enan, along the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This will be the north boundary. On the east side the boundary will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and as far as Tamar. This will be the east boundary. On the south side it will run from Tamar as far as the water of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Great Sea. This will be the south boundary. On the west side, the Great Sea will be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo Hamath. This will be the west boundary.”**

God promised to give the Promised Land to Abraham and his descendants for ever according to:

Genesis 13:15

**All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring for ever.**

God’s promise was confirmed with Isaac according to:

Genesis 26:2-5

**The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My requirements, My commands, My decrees and My laws.”**

God confirmed His promise with Jacob according to:

Genesis 28:12-14

**He (Jacob) had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord, and He said, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.”**

And Exodus 32:13

**Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom You swore by Your own self: I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them , and it will be their inheritance for ever.**

And Leviticus 26:42

**I will remember My covenant with Jacob and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.**

### **God's Covenant with the children of Israel**

God confirmed His promise with the children of Israel according to:

Exodus 6:6-8

**“Therefore say to the Israelites, “I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as My own people, and I will be Your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord Your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.”**

And Deuteronomy 29:12-15

**You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord Your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as His people, that He may be Your God as He promised you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God but also with those who are not here today.**

And Psalm 94:14

**For the Lord will not reject His people; He will never forsake His inheritance.**

And Psalm 105:7-11

**O descendants of Abraham his servant, O sons of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God; His judgements are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant for ever, the word He commanded for a thousand generations, the covenant He made with Abraham, the oath He swore to Isaac. He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant: To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit.**

And Isaiah 60:21

**Then will all your people be righteous and they will possess the land for ever....**

And Jeremiah 31:35-36

**This is what the Lord says, He who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that it waves roar – the Lord Almighty is His name: “Only if these decrees vanish from My sight,” declares the Lord, “will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before**

Me.”

And Jeremiah 33:25-26

**This is what the Lord says, “If I have not established My covenant with day and night and the fixed laws of heaven and earth, then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.”**

And Ezekiel 37:25

**They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there for ever, and David my servant will be their prince for ever.**

### **Israel’s disobedience would have consequences**

However, God warned Israel that disobedience on their part would have serious consequences according to:

Deuteronomy 28:58, 64-67

**If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name – the Lord Your God... Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods –gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, “If only it were evening!” and in the evening, “If only it were morning!” – because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see.**

And Deuteronomy 31:16-18

**And the Lord said to Moses: “You are going to rest with your fathers and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, “Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?” And I will certainly hide My face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.”**

Israel did in fact disobey God’s laws so God did indeed discipline Israel according to:

Jeremiah 30:11

**“I am with you and will save you, declares the Lord. Though I completely destroy all the nations among which I scatter you, I will not completely destroy you. I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished.”**

And Amos 9:8-9

**“Surely the eyes of the sovereign Lord are on the sinful kingdom. I will destroy it**

from the face of the earth - yet I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," declares the Lord. "For I will give the command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, and not a pebble will reach the ground."

### The First Stage of God's Discipline of Israel

This discipline has taken place in two stages. The first one, which lasted seventy years, has been described by the Prophet Jeremiah in:

Jeremiah 25:11

**This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.**

The Prophet Daniel refers to this prophecy in:

Daniel 9:2

**In the first year of his reign, I Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.**

The Prophet Jeremiah speaks as well of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in:

Jeremiah 33:4-5

**For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword in the fight with the Babylonians: "They will be filled with the dead bodies of the men I will slay in My anger and wrath. I will hide My face from this city because of its wickedness."**

However, after seventy years the people did return to their land under Nehemiah according to:

Nehemiah 1:8-9

**Remember the instruction You gave Your servant Moses, saying, "If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, but if you return to Me and obey My commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for My place."**

And Nehemiah 7:6-73

**These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive.....**

**The priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers and the temple servants, along with certain of the people and the rest of the Israelites, settle in their own towns.**

## The Second Stage of God's Discipline of Israel

The second stage of God's discipline of Israel has been decreed to last for 490 years according to:

Daniel 9:24

**Seventy "sevens" have been decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy.**

Up till now sixty-nine "sevens" or sixty-nine periods of seven years, which is a total of 483 years, have been fulfilled. However, one more period of a "seven" is to take place as the final part of God's discipline of His people, the Jews.

We will look at that final seven-year period later on in the study.

Daniel describes the destruction of Jerusalem in:

Daniel 9:26

**After the sixty-two "sevens", the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.**

The above verse indicates the time of Jesus' First Coming and His death. It furthermore speaks about the rule of the Roman Empire when Jerusalem was destroyed. This happened in 70A.D.

Jeremiah speaks about this second stage of God's discipline of His people in:

Jeremiah 9:16

**I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their fathers have known, and I will pursue them with the sword until I have destroyed them.**

The Prophet Ezekiel speaks about God's discipline of His people in:

Ezekiel 36:19

**I dispersed them among the nations and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions.**

Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem in:

Luke 19:41-44

**As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and your children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognise the time of God's coming to you."**

And Luke 21:20-24

**When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its**

desolation is near. Then 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. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How 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. They 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.

The destruction of Jerusalem took place in 70 A.D. The reason for it was that the Jewish people had not accepted Jesus as their Messiah as we can read in:

Matthew 27:25

**All the people answered, "Let His blood be on us and on our children."**

### **God's Discipline of His People only for a Season**

However, God has made an eternal Covenant with the land and her people. Therefore, any rejection by Him will be for a season and not for ever according to:

Leviticus 26:42-45

**I will remember My covenant with Jacob and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected My laws and abhorred My decrees, Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking My covenant with them. I am the Lord their God. For their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the Lord.**

And Deuteronomy 30:4-5

**Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.**

Many of the prophets prophesy about the return of God's people to their land, for instance the Prophet Isaiah says in:

Isaiah 11:11

**In that day the Lord will reach out His hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of His people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea.**

And Isaiah 11:12

**"He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; He will gather the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."**

And Isaiah 43:5-6

**"Do not be afraid for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and**

gather you from the west. I will say to the north, "Give them up!" and to the south, Do not hold them back. Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the end of the earth."

And Isaiah 54:7-8

**"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you, " says the Lord Your Redeemer.**

The Prophet Jeremiah prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Jeremiah 31:10

**Hear the word of the Lord, O nations; proclaim it in distant coastlands; He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over His flock like a shepherd.**

And Jeremiah 31:31-34

**"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord, because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, " declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more."**

And Jeremiah 31:37

**"This is what the Lord says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done."**

And Jeremiah 32:37-41

**I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in My furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be My people and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear Me for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear Me, so that they will never turn away from Me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all My heart and soul.**

And Jeremiah 33:6-11

**Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal My people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against Me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against Me. Then this city will bring Me renown, praise and honour before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.**

The Prophet Ezekiel prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Ezekiel 11:17

**Therefore say: "This is what the sovereign Lord says; I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again."**

And Ezekiel 20:41

**I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will show myself holy among you in the sight of the nations.**

In fact, the Prophet Ezekiel gives us a detailed prophecy of the return of the Jewish people to their land in Ezekiel 36 and 37 when the nation will longer be divided. Some of the verses from this prophecy are:

Ezekiel 36:8

**But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for My people Israel, for they will soon come home.**

And Ezekiel 36:24

**For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.**

And Ezekiel 36:28

**You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be My people and I will be your God.**

The Prophet Amos prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Amos 9:14-15

**"I will bring back My exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.**

The Prophet Micah prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Micah 7:18-20

**Who is a God like You, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? You do not stay angry for ever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in long days ago.**

The Prophet Zephania prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Zephaniah 3:20

**At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honour and praise among all the peoples of the earth when I restore your fortunes**

**before your eyes.**

The Prophet Zechariah prophesies about the return of God's people to their land in:

Zechariah 8:7-8

**This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will save My people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be My people and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."**

The above passages are being fulfilled at this very moment as many Jewish people have already returned to their land and others are in the process of returning.

### **Israel Re-born**

In fact on 14 May 1948 the state of Israel was reborn as was prophesied in:

Isaiah 66:8

**Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things?  
Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?  
Yet no sooner is Zion in labour than she gives birth to her children.**

However, God has declared that Jerusalem will be a cause of trouble for all nations according to:

Zechariah 12:2

**I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem.**

### **Various Wars Prophesied**

A specific attack by neighbouring countries has been described in:

Psalms 83:4-8

**"Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you – the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Gebal, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to lend strength to the descendants of Lot.**

Even though we may not recognise the names of many of these nations, they still exist but under a different name for instance:

Tents of Edom is Palestine;

The Ishmaelites are the inhabitants of Saudi Arabia;

Moab is Central Jordan;

The Hagrites are the people living in Egypt;

Gebal is Northern Lebanon;

Ammon is Northern Jordan;

Amalek is the land in which Arabs live south of Israel;

Philistia is the Gaza Strip in Palestine;

The people of Tyre are the people of Lebanon;

Assyria is Syria.

At the time of that war Israel will deal with these neighbouring countries according to:

Isaiah 11:14-17

**“They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. The Lord will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind He will sweep His hand over the Euphrates river. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt.”**

This war has not yet taken place but is possibly the next important war to happen. Israel will be victorious and will expand her borders to what they were meant to be all along according to:

Genesis 15:18

**On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.”**

Israel will then live in peace and security. This will cause certain nations to rise up against her in jealousy according to:

Ezekiel 38:14-16

**Therefore son of man prophesy and say to Gog: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day when My people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it? You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. You will advance against My people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me when I show Myself holy through you before their eyes.”**

The nations involved in the above war are mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2, 5-6 as follows:

Magog, Meshech and Tubal are all part of Russia.

Persia is Iran.

Cush is Ethiopia.

Put could either be Somalia or Lybia.

Gomer is Germany.

Togarma is Armenia.

These nations are led by “Gog”. This is very likely a reference to a demonic being since he is mentioned again at the time of the final battle at the end of the one-thousand year reign of Christ on earth. We can read this in:

Revelation 20:7-8

**When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.**

However, the nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2, 5-6 will be defeated according to:

Ezekiel 39:4-5

**“On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken,” declares the Sovereign Lord.**

A detailed prophecy of this event can be found in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

### **The Temple Re-build**

A Temple will be re-built in Jerusalem according to:

Revelation 11:1-2

**I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshippers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the Holy City for 42 months.”**

Much preparation has already been made for the building of this Temple which very possibly will be build around the time of the Antichrist when Jerusalem will be going through the Great Tribulation for a period of 42 months or 3 and ½ years as the above passage indicates.

### **Jacob’s Trouble.**

Even though many of God’s people have returned to their land, the majority of them are non-believing Jews. God has decreed that a final seven-year period needs to happen as part of His discipline of them to make them turn to Him. The Prophet Daniel describes that seven-year period called the Tribulation, Jacob’s Trouble or the Day of the Lord when the Antichrist will be on the scene in:

Daniel 9:27

**He will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven.” In the middle of the “seven” he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.**

Jesus refers to this passage in Daniel in:

Matthew 24:15-22

**So when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel –let the reader understand – Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of his house. Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**

The “elect” in this passage are the Jewish people whom God has chosen to survive this ordeal according to:

Revelation 7:2-8

**“Then I (John) saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: “Do not harm the land or the seas or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”**

Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel. From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben 12,000, from the tribe of Gad 12,000, from the tribe of Asher 12,000, from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000, from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000, from the tribe of Simeon 12,000, from the tribe of Levi 12,000, from the tribe of Issachar 12,000, from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000, from the tribe of Joseph 12,000, from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

The Antichrist will confirm a seven-year covenant with Israel but he will break it after three and a half years. He will enter the Temple and will not allow the sacrificial system to continue. Instead he will set up a false idol. This event will start off the Great Tribulation, which will last for another three and a half years.

Daniel gives us a clear description of the Antichrist in:

Daniel 11:36-45

**The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of-things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regards for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, not will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above all. Instead of them, he will honour a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honour with gold and silver. With precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honour those who acknowledge him. He will Make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price. At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade any countries and sweep through the like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Lybians and Nubians in submission. But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.**

We can read as well of this time of distress in:

Daniel 12:1

**... There will be a time of distress such as not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people – everyone whose name is found written in the book - will be delivered.**

The Prophet Jeremiah prophesies about the period of “Jacob’s Trouble” in:

Jeremiah 30:7

**How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it.**

The Prophet Joel prophesies about the Day of the Lord in:

Joel 1:15

**Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.**

And Joel 2:1-2

**Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble. For the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand – a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness.**

The Prophet Amos prophesies about the Day of the Lord in:

Amos 5:18

**Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the Lord? That day will be darkness, not light.**

The Prophet Zephaniah prophesies about the Day of the Lord in:

Zephaniah 1:14-15

**The great day of the Lord is near – near and coming quickly. Listen! The cry on the day of the Lord will be bitter, the shouting of the warrior there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness.**

The Prophet Zechariah prophesies about the Day of the Lord in:

Zechariah 13:8-9

**“In the whole land,” declares the Lord, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet – one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name and I will answer them; I will say, “They are My people,” and they will say, “The Lord is our God.”**

### **The Elect**

As I have already mentioned God will protect a certain group of Jewish people during the Time of the Jacob’s Trouble. We can read this in:

Zechariah 13:8

**“In the whole land,” declares the Lord, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name and I will answer them; I will say, “They are My people,” and they will say, “The Lord**

is our God.”

And Revelation 12:14

**The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and a half time, out of the serpent’s reach.**

The prophecy in Revelation 12:14 refers to a group of Jewish people who would be protected by God for a period of three and a half years, which is the time of the Great Tribulation.

### **The Return of the Lord**

Towards the end of the Great Tribulation the nations of the world under the Antichrist will gather around Jerusalem for a final battle, called Armageddon. At that time the Lord Jesus Christ will return with the believers to put an end to the battle according to:

Zechariah 12:2-4

**“I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness,” declares the Lord. “I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations.”**

And Zechariah 12:9

**On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.**

And Revelation 19:11-21

**I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a Name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dripped in blood, and His Name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this Name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great.” Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the Rider on the horse and His army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded the those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.**

The rider on the white horse is Christ and His army is the Church who has previously been raptured according to:

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

**For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.**

The Church is now returning with the Lord.

### **Recognition of the Messiah**

At that time the Jewish people who are still alive will recognise Jesus as their Messiah.

The Prophet Isaiah prophesies about this event in:

Isaiah 59:20

**“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the Lord.**

The Apostle Paul refers to the above passage in:

Romans 11:26-27

**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:  
The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob.  
And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins.**

The Prophet Zechariah prophesies about this event in:

Zechariah 12:10-14

**And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication, they will look on Me, the One they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like that of the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves; the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives.**

The gospel writer Mark writes about the Second Coming of Jesus and explains that at the time certain elect will be gathered together by the angels in:

Mark 13:26

**At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And He will send His angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.**

The gospel writer Luke writes in:

Luke 17:34-35

**I tell you on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.**

The fact that some people are sleeping while others are at work very likely indicates that Luke refers here to people who live in different places and consequently in different time zones.

The elect in the above passage do NOT refer to the Church. The Church will already have been gathered to Christ before the event as described by Mark takes place. We can read of the gathering of the Church, which is done by Christ Himself, in:

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

**For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead of Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.**

The elect in the passage in Mark are not being gathered by the Lord but by angels. This is therefore referring to a very different occasion and to a different group of elect people, namely Jewish people who have not yet returned to their homeland. The angels will at that time gather them from the nations and bring them into their homeland to meet the Lord.

The gospel writer Luke writes that the Jewish people will one day recognise their Messiah in:

Luke 13:35

**“...I (Jesus) tell you, you will not see Me again until you say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”**

### **Millennium Kingdom**

At the return of Christ He will rule the world from Jerusalem for a thousand years. At that time the Jewish people will finally fulfil their destiny for God's gifts and His call are irrevocable according to Romans 11:29.

The Prophet Isaiah describes what the conditions will be like during the time of Christ's reign on earth in:

Isaiah 11:6-9

**The wolf will lie with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child will put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.**

And Isaiah 65:18-25

**But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in My people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. They will build houses and dwell in them, they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of My people; My chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain.**

The conditions described here by the Prophet Isaiah are very similar to the conditions as they were before the Fall. The Apostle Paul explains that creation itself is longing to be set free from its present conditions because of the sin of mankind. We can read that in:

Romans 8:19-21

**The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

From the above passage we learn that the liberation of creation is very closely related to the redemption of the bodies of believers. Therefore the conditions as described by Isaiah in Isaiah 11:6-9 can only take place after the bodies of sons of God, the children of God have been redeemed which will take place at the time of the Rapture of the Church as we can read in:

I Corinthians 15:51-53

**Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.**

The Prophet Isaiah describes the role of Israel during the one-thousand year, or millennial reign of Christ on earth in greater detail in Isaiah 60-63 among other passages.

The Prophet Ezekiel prophesies about the future rule of Christ on earth in:

Ezekiel 37:24-28

**My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow My laws and be careful to keep My decrees. They will live in the**

land I gave to My servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there for ever, and David My servant will be their prince for ever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put My sanctuary among them for ever. My dwelling-place will be with them; I will be their God and they will be My people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when My sanctuary is among them for ever.

And Ezekiel 43:6-7

While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. He said, "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place for the soles of My feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites for ever. The house of Israel will never again defile My holy name- neither they nor their kings – by their prostitution and their lifeless idols of their kings at their high places."

The Prophet Micah prophesies about the future rule of Christ on earth in:

Micah 4:1-3

"In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills and peoples will stream to it.

Many nations will come and say, "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.

The angel Gabriel foretold Mary about the future rule of Jesus in:

Luke 1:30-33

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the Nae Jesus. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."

### **Millennium Temple**

During the reign of Christ on earth there will be a Temple in Jerusalem. This Temple has been described by the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 40 and 41.

### **Satan Bound**

The Apostle John prophesies about the one-thousand year reign of Jesus. He explains that Satan will be bound during that period in:

Revelation 20:1-6

**And I saw an angel coming down, having the keys to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.**

### **Final Battle**

At the end of the one-thousand year reign of Christ on earth there will be a final battle around Jerusalem as described by John in:

Revelation 20:7-9

**When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth – Gog and Magog – to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand of the seashore. They marched across the breadth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city He loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.**

This final battle will bring the millennium kingdom, during which time Israel fulfilled her destiny, to an end.

Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire according to:

Revelation 20:10

**“And the devil, who deceived them, as thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”**

The White Throne Judgement will take place according to:

Revelation 20:11-15

**Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

### **The New Jerusalem**

The earthly city of Jerusalem will be replaced with the heavenly city of Jerusalem as described by John in:

Revelation 21:2

**I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,**

**prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.**

At that time a new era will begin, which will last for ever and ever when God comes to live among His people according to:

Revelation 21:3-4

**And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**

We have come to the end of our study on the role of Israel. May it inspire you to pray for the Peace of Jerusalem.