

## Chapter 3

### ***The Seventy Weeks of Daniel***

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When it comes to understanding "the end times" or what many call "the last days," it is imperative that we understand a subject of Scripture considered to be the bedrock of prophecy — the Seventieth Week of Daniel. If you can understand this topic, the book of Revelation and the whole scenario of the end times will make sense like never before.

We have gone into the book of Daniel and gained some tremendous insight into identifying the "little horn," the seventh head of the final beast system that is described in Revelation 13. This seventh head, which I believe to be the United States of America, is going to be the *prime mover* of bringing the nations of the world together under the rule of one-world government. This transformation will most likely be accomplished by the introduction of UN forces within the cities of the world as a means to bring calm and control to the havoc that will ensue as the seals spoken of in the book of Revelation begin to take their effect on earth.

The timing of these "seals" can be both understood and expected as we go further into our study of both the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation. God gives us the information as to who, when, how and why these judgments are coming to pass on the earth so we as Christians are not left ignorant or spiritually unprepared.

Before we go on and study these impending judgments, I would like to cover some important principles first.

1. We need to understand that God is omnipotent and that He has a plan for the nations, even the wicked. Proverbs 16:4 says "*The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.*" Neither you nor I may totally understand this verse, but regardless of how we feel, we need to accept how God plans to deal with mankind.
2. Once the event takes place that signals the beginning of the Seventieth Week of Daniel, there is no turning back from God's timetable. The last seven years of human history will have begun.

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## ***Daniel's Prayer***

Chapter nine of the book of Daniel describes a scene in which the prophet receives one of the most important revelations in the Bible. Verses 3-19 tell us how Daniel was deep in prayer and supplication before the Lord, confessing the sins of the people of Israel; asking God to forgive them for rejecting His laws. Daniel pleaded for mercy on the people who were scattered about and for God to once again restore the holy city of Jerusalem back into the hands of Israel. It was during this time of intense prayer that Daniel was visited by the archangel Gabriel and was given a vision revealing the future of Israel and Jerusalem for all time. The vision was this:

***Daniel 9:24*** Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy [place]. **25** So you are to know and discern [*We see that God wanted Daniel to know and discern the timetable, the time frame, in which these future events would take place*] [that] from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince [there will be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. **26** Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end [will come] with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. **27** And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations [will come] one who makes desolate [*This is the 8th beast, that one-world government under the guise of the UN that will be a product of the policies, money, and directives of the United States of America, the 7th beast*], even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate [*the final beast kingdom*]." (italicized words added)

The first thing we have to understand is what is meant by seventy weeks. The term "weeks" in Scripture when used prophetically equals seven years. It is the Hebrew word *shabua* and means "a period of seven, either days or years."<sup>13</sup> When used prophetically throughout Scripture it usually means years, as in the book of Numbers.

***Numbers 14:33*** And your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer [for] your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. **34** According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, [even] forty years, and you shall know My opposition.

When speaking of the future, God signified a day for a year, thus a "week" of days would be equal to seven years. Gabriel's message to Daniel stated "seventy weeks upon thy people and thy holy city." Seventy weeks is made up of 490 days. Thus with each day representing a year, the time period Gabriel spoke of would equal 490 years. So what is to be accomplished for Israel during these 490 years? We go back to Daniel 9:24...

***Daniel 9:24*** Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy [place].

We need to study in detail what this Scripture means. In the phrase "*to finish the transgression*," the word "finish" is the Hebrew word *kala* and means "to shut up, bring to an end." The word "transgression" is the word *pesha* which means "rebellion against nations, against individuals, against God." Scripture is telling us then that within 490 years, God will bring to an end Israel's rebellion against Him.

In the phrase "*to make an end of sins*," the word "end" is the Hebrew word *taman*, and means "to finish, be at an end." "Sins" is the word *chatta'ah*; and refers to "the condition or the guilt of sin." God is telling us here that He will bring about an end of Israel's condition and guilt of sin during this same time frame.

The word "reconciliation" in "*to make reconciliation for iniquity*," is the word *kaphar*; which means "to cover, make an atonement for," and

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"iniquity" is the word *avon* which means "perversity, or guilt of iniquity"<sup>14</sup>

God is saying in this important verse that in the time frame of 490 years, He is going to make atonement for Israel's perversity and guilt of iniquity and He will bring an end to Israel's disobedience. It is a disobedience that remains even today, in that Jews continue to reject Jesus Christ as God's only begotten Son and the Messiah. After God makes reconciliation for Israel's iniquity and when their rebellion is brought to an end, God says it will be time to "*bring in everlasting righteousness and seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy.*" From what we have studied thus far, we can see that Daniel 9:24 says that at the end of these 490 years everlasting righteousness will be brought in by God, and it will complete the visions and prophecies of the prophets. All this will conclude with the most holy (Jesus Christ) being anointed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Verse 25 of Daniel 9 tells us when the last days begin.

***Daniel 9:25*** So you are to know and discern [that] from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince [there will be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

This Scripture says that from a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah comes will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. Since a "week" is equal to seven years, seven "weeks" equals forty-nine years, and 62 "weeks" equals 434 years, making for a total of 483 years.

The decree spoken of, to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, is acknowledged by most scholars to be the 2nd decree of Artaxerxes, which was given to Nehemiah on March 14, 445 BC and is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8.<sup>15</sup> At the end of this 483 year time period, it says Messiah would come, which is exactly what happened. 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes, which is 173,880 days using the Jewish calendar of 360 days, Jesus Christ entered into Jerusalem on a donkey and was heralded as King (John 12:13).<sup>16</sup>

***Daniel 9:26*** Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its

end [*the city and the sanctuary*] [will come] with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (italicized words added)

After 483 years, the Messiah was to be cut off and have nothing. The vision Daniel received remains accurate to the minutest detail for we know from the Gospels that not many days after Jesus entered Jerusalem and was hailed as King, He was crucified and forsaken by His disciples. I would like to quote this verse from *The Amplified Bible* to further clarify this great truth.

***Daniel 9:26(b)*** And after the sixty-two weeks [of years] shall the anointed one be cut off *or* killed, and shall have nothing [and no one belonging] to [and defending] him. And the people of the *other* prince who shall come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and even to the end there shall be war, and desolations are decreed.

The "people of the other prince" is a reference to the armies of the world government that will come in the future and destroy Jerusalem during the last days. Scripture says the destruction of Jerusalem will come with a flood, which is a term used often in Scripture to depict large armies of ungodly men. The next several verses show this...

***2 Samuel 22:5*** When the waves of death compassed me, the *floods* of ungodly men made me afraid; (KJV)

***Psalms 18:4*** The sorrows of death compassed me, and the *floods* of ungodly men made me afraid. (KJV)

***Jeremiah 46:7*** Who [is] this [that] cometh up as a *flood*, whose waters are moved as the rivers?

***Jeremiah 46:8*** Egypt riseth up like & *flood*, and [his] waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, [and] will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. (KJV) (emphasis added)

These verses show how God uses the analogy of flood waters for the armies of the unrighteous. According to Scripture back in Daniel

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9:26, this pillage of the holy city will continue even until the end of the last seven years, and these desolations are decreed by God to take place.

To review what has been said thus far, Daniel 9:25 and 26 told us there will be 483 years from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah comes — who at that time will be cut off, crucified, and have nothing. This portion of Scripture has already been fulfilled by Christ, so sixty-nine of the "seventy weeks" have already taken place which leaves one "week" left — which is called **the Seventieth Week of Daniel**. It is in this last seven year period that all the events of verse 26 and 27 must take place because the angel said in verse 24, **all** the events (the finishing of the transgression, the ending of sin, making atonement, and bringing in everlasting righteousness) will take place within seventy weeks or 490 years.

Why is there a gap between the sixty-ninth "week," and the yet to be fulfilled Seventieth Week? The gap is the time period of "the Church" where the world has been given the perfect opportunity to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved before the final judgments of God take place on the earth.

Let's go a step further and find out more about the event that the Word says has to take place in order for the Seventieth Week to begin.

*Daniel 9:27* And he [*the beast, the other prince yet to come*] will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [*7 years*], but in the middle of the week [*which would be 3 ½ years*] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations [*will come*] one who makes desolate, [*the final 8th beast, that has been brought about by the 7th*] even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. (italicized words added)

Scripture says that the beast is going to make a covenant with Israel and "the many" at the beginning of the final seven year period. Three and one half years later, the beast will break this covenant and cause an abomination to be set up at the Temple Mount area that will cause not only the desolation of Jerusalem, but is going to culminate in God pouring out desolation upon this final one-world government system. What is this covenant and why does it cause such retribution not only to Israel but the whole world? The book of Genesis and the book of Isaiah give us the answer.

## **The Everlasting Covenant**

In Genesis 12:1-3, we see God gave a promise to Abraham:

**Genesis 12:1** Now the LORD said to Abraham, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; **2** And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; **3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

God gave Abraham a promise that would affect the entire earth, and Abraham acted on this promise from God. He left his home country and eventually settled in Canaan as recorded in Genesis 13:12, and it was in Canaan that God entered into a covenant with Abraham, promising him and his descendants the land from the River of Egypt which is on the lower west side of Israel, unto the great River Euphrates, which is on the eastern border of Iraq.

**Genesis 15:18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates'

God also told Abraham that this covenant would be an *everlasting* covenant and that it would be established through Isaac and his descendants - *not* through the descendants of Ishmael, the son born to him by Hagar.

**Genesis 17:8** 'And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.'

Do you see the promise? God told Abraham that the land was to be an everlasting possession.

**Genesis 17:19** But God said, 'Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish

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My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for *his descendants* after him.'

This Scripture gives the reason for the whole Middle East conflict today. God entered into an everlasting covenant with the descendants of Isaac and *they* are to inherit the land extending from the River of Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River. This covenant has not yet been realized because the descendants of Ishmael continue to live in and vie for the land that Israel presently occupies. The Bible says this whole area of land is to be owned by Isaac's descendants, Israel, and this truth was reaffirmed even to Moses in Exodus 33:1.

**Exodus 33:1** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 'Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

The land of Israel was not given to the descendants of Ishmael — those we know today as Arabs and Palestinians. Look at Joshua 1:2-4.

**Joshua 1:2** Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. 3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory.

This point is worthy of emphasis because the land given in covenant by God to Israel is now being challenged and repudiated not only by the Arab world, but by Israel itself! *God promised Israel a far larger piece of land than they presently occupy today.* The land promised to Israel has since been inhabited by the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, a people who have an "everlasting enmity" towards the sons of Israel. This deep-seated hatred for God's chosen people is spoken of in Ezekiel 35:5-15.

**Ezekiel 35:5** Because you have had everlasting enmity and have delivered the sons of Israel to the power of the sword at

the time of their calamity, at the time of the punishment of the end, [*the Arab world will give Israel over to the power of the sword at the time of the end*] **6** therefore, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you. **7** And I will make Mount Seir a waste and a desolation, and I will cut off from it the one who passes through and returns.

Mount Seir, south of the Dead Sea, is representative of where the descendants of Esau lived, and these descendants of Ishmael and Esau include the Palestinians and the neighboring Arab nations. God looks upon the Arab world as enemies of His chosen people and has promised destruction and desolation to many of their cities and people in the time of the end.

What will precipitate such a crisis? Ezekiel 35:5 says the Arabs will "*deliver the sons of Israel to the power of the sword*" which will be "*at the time of the punishment of the end.*" How will it happen? In Daniel 9:27 we read that the Seventieth Week of Daniel begins with Israel making a covenant with the beast (the United States) and "the many" which could represent the myriad of Arab nations around Israel. Three and a half years later, in the midst of the week, the covenant will be broken and the city of Jerusalem will be overrun by armies of ungodly men. The stage is now set for all of these events to take place for we have seen the United States relentlessly negotiate for a Palestinian state and further land concessions from Israel in order to appease and bring about peace with their Arab neighbors.

### ***The Persian Gulf War***

When Saddam Hussein began his campaign against Kuwait, the United States led the world into a worldwide mobilization of military strength via the United Nations in order to circumvent and push back (but interestingly not destroy) the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to the Middle East. President George H.W. Bush at that time said he believed the Gulf crisis to be "the crucible of the new world order." A crucible is a vessel, a cup made out of porcelain, which is used for melting, or oxidizing a substance that requires a high degree of heat. It is my firm belief that the Gulf War was the catalyst, the crucible, whereby the whole world was brought into accepting UN/US infiltration and domination into

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every major hot spot on the globe, and most importantly, caused Israel to fall into line with the rest of the world by accepting the means that will bring about a "new world order." By witnessing the United States' awesome military strength exerted during the Gulf crisis, Israel amazingly delegated the protection of her borders and cities over to the armies of the United States, depending on *them* to stop Iraq's missiles by way of the acclaimed Patriot missile.

As it turns out, Israel was seduced by the United States and its display of power into depending on the beast and its weaponry, rather than on God and Israel's own military might to protect their homeland. Israel forfeited her strength and belief in Jehovah's protection and instead gave it to the United States. This seduction of Israel by the United States could be seen on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993 when Israel began an initial peace plan with its sworn enemies, the Palestinians, under the assurance that the United States would be the "guarantor" of the peace process. Why was this wrong? Because Israel betrayed God by forsaking the everlasting covenant He made with Abraham and his descendants and instead, through the Oslo Peace Accord, began to formally and purposely give away land which the Palestinians have no right to own. Israel began the process of trading "land for peace" relying solely on the United States to be in President Clinton's words, the "guarantor" of its success. The promise President Clinton made to Israel was this:

The United States is committed to ensuring that the people who are affected by this agreement will be made more secure by it, and to leading the world in marshaling the resources necessary to implement the difficult details that will make real the principles to which you commit yourselves today... Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Chairman, this day belongs to you... Together, today, with all our hearts and all our souls, we bid them *shalom, salaam, peace*.

This initial act by Israel of forsaking the everlasting covenant and cozying up to the beast is going to have worldwide effects. Isaiah chapter 24 deals entirely with the devastation that will take place in the last days due to Israel's disobedience in this matter.

**Isaiah 24:1** Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface, and scatters its inhabitants.

2 And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. 3 The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth mourns [and] withers, the world fades [and] withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. 5 The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, ***broke the everlasting covenant.*** 6 Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (emphasis added)

### ***Israel's Covenant with Death***

Leaders of Israel continue to negotiate with the Palestinians and adjacent governments about how to exchange Israeli land for the guarantee of lasting peace with their enemies who surround them. We go to Isaiah chapter 28 where it gives God's perspective of rebellious Israel in the last days when the consummate peace agreement is signed with the Arab nations:

***Isaiah 28:14*** Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, **15** Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by; For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.'

God calls Israel's pact with their enemies "a covenant with death." God also says that despite what Israel's leaders think, they will have in fact made falsehood their refuge and instead made a pact with the grave. The false security Israel now has by thinking the United States will protect them if attacked is going to have drastic consequences.

***Isaiah 28:18*** And your covenant with death shall be canceled, And your pact with Sheol shall not stand; When the overwhelming scourge passes through [*which are the attacking Arab countries*], Then you become its trampling [place]. **19** As often as it passes through, it will seize you. For

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morning after morning it will pass through, [anytime] during the day or night. And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means [*what it is saying is that Israel will then realize that they have entered into the time that is termed "Jacob's Trouble"*] **20** The bed is too short on which to stretch out, And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in. **21** For the LORD will rise up as [at] Mount Perazim, He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon; To do His task, His unusual task, And to work His work, His extraordinary work. **22** And now do not carry on as scoffers, Lest your fetters be made stronger; For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts, Of decisive destruction on all the earth. (italicized words added)

Because of Israel's disobedience, God will use the unbelieving nations of the world as vehicles to carry out His punishment of Israel for its rebellion, transgressions, and iniquity. This punishment that will take place during the last 3 ½ years of the Seventieth Week of Daniel is the time of *Jacob's Trouble* otherwise known as *the Great Tribulation*.

When this covenant with death is signed, the beast will break the covenant and will cause the offering of prayers and worship of the people of Israel to cease at the Temple Mount area. This event I believe will start out as a military occupation by United States led UN forces at the Temple Mount area. When the Palestinian and Syrian armies decide to move and take Jerusalem by force, the UN peace keeping force will renege on protecting Israel, just like they have done in supposedly protecting many other hot spots around the world. At that time you are going to see a flood of murder and destruction come upon the Jewish state the likes of which has never been seen before. Psalm 83 is, I believe, a prophetic utterance describing this harrowing time.

***Psalm 83:1*** A Song, a Psalm of Asaph. O God, do not remain quiet; Do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. **2** For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; And those who hate Thee have exalted themselves. **3** They make shrewd plans against Thy people, And conspire together against Thy treasured ones. **4** They have said, 'Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more.' **5** For they have conspired together with one mind; Against Thee do they [*the Arabs*] make a covenant: **6** The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab, and the Hagrites; **7**

Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; **8** Assyria also has joined with them; They have become a help to the children of Lot. Selah. (italicized words added)

The PLO and the Arabs have in fact conspired against Israel in order to take over that hallowed nation. It is envisioned and articulated in what is known as the "three-phase plan" adopted by the top PLO command two decades ago. In an article exposing the real motives for Yasser Arafat, the *New American* magazine described the plan:

The first phase, from 1967 to 1974, called for shocking the world with brutal terrorist acts as a way to put the Palestinian cause before the world. Phase two, from 1974 to 1983, centered on winning political legitimacy, while continuing the "armed struggle" through separate, clandestine branches. The third phase, which we are now witnessing, is a two-part strategy for destroying Israel. The first part involves the creation of a Palestinian state (through negotiation) on territory relinquished by Israel; the second calls for using that territory to launch a final assault against the Zionist infidels.<sup>17</sup>

This view is substantiated by Arafat's comments in the June, 1995 issue of *Parade Magazine* when he said:

All of us are willing to be martyrs along the way, until our flag flies over Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine. Let no one think they can scare us with weapons, for we have mightier weapons — the weapon of faith, the weapon of martyrdom, the weapon of jihad.

Also in the September, 1995 *Jerusalem Post*:

By Allah I swear that the Palestinian people are prepared to sacrifice the last boy and the last girl so that the Palestinian flag will be flown over the walls, the churches, and the mosques of Jerusalem.

What has been the United States' role in this as the 7<sup>th</sup> beast? The United States has been deeply involved on both sides by doing the following:

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- #1 We give the PLO millions of dollars to build up the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and Jericho, all making Jerusalem an easier target for terrorist attacks.
- #2 We offer Israel 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees as bait to keep them committed to the peace process.
- #3 We send millions of dollars to a supposedly bankrupt Russia, who in turn sends weapons to Syria and Iran, both bitter enemies of Israel.

What's wrong with this picture? Nothing, if your goal as a world power is to ultimately deceive Israel and set them up for destruction. The trap is indeed being laid through an intricate web of deceit, money, and political intrigue. Israel's enemies are strengthened directly or indirectly by the United States, peace will be promised by the beast who will prove to be an unfaithful ally, and the conflagration at the holy city will begin 3 ½ years after the signing of the covenant of death, a peace treaty involving Israel and its Arab neighbors. It will be at or near this time that the famed "abomination of desolation" will take place at the Temple Mount which Jesus Christ described in Matthew 24 — the act that begins the Great Tribulation.

### ***Betrayal and War in Jerusalem***

The record in Matthew 24 begins by telling us that after Jesus left the temple with His disciples, they showed Him the buildings of the temple area. Jesus warned them not to be overly impressed with the buildings because He knew there would come a time when not one stone would be left upon another. His disciples then asked him in verse 7, "*when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?*" Christ then proceeded to tell them the chronology of events that will take place during the last days. The first sign was a rise in the incidences of false Christ's (verse 8). Then there would be more wars and rumors of wars (verse 9), followed by a marked increase in earthquakes and famines around the world (verse 11). In verses 12-19, Christ gave His disciples added encouragement to stay faithful amidst the persecution they were going to suffer for His name. We then see what is to happen next according to the Gospel of Luke.

**Luke 21:20** But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. **21** Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; **22** because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Christ told His disciples to be aware when all these signs begin to happen — the false christs, the wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines in divers places. He said when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies — then know her desolation is at hand. This desolation is the one spoken about in Daniel 9:27 when it says in the middle of the week the beast will put a stop to sacrifice at the temple area and "*on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation.*" What happens next? Christ tells us in verse 23-24:

**Luke 21:23** Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, **24** and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

A massive slaughter will take place in Jerusalem as it is trodden down by the Gentiles (unbelieving nations) until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled, which we will see later is speaking about the end of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. In Matthew 24, Jesus gives the same warning to flee Jerusalem that He did when He told them what to do when armies surround the city.

**Matthew 24:15** Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place let the reader understand, **16** then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; **17** let him who is on the housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; **18** and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. **19** But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! **20** But pray that your flight may not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath; **21** for

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then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be.

These Scriptures tell us when the Great Tribulation begins. In Luke 21, Christ said when the armies surround Jerusalem, you will know the tribulation is about to begin. In Matthew 24, He says when the abomination of desolation spoken of in the book of Daniel stands in the holy place, the tribulation is about to begin. Thus, the armies surrounding Jerusalem and the abomination that makes desolate standing in the holy place are one and the same. Daniel 11:45 confirms this:

***Daniel 11:45*** And he [*the beast*] will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him. (italicized words added)

The beast, spoken of in the last half of Daniel 11, will pitch the tents of his military forces between the seas (the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea) and the beautiful holy mountain (Jerusalem). In other words, he will station his army somewhere near or at the temple area in Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> When these Gentile armies take control over the Temple Mount area, this act of arrogance and disrespect to God and the holy place will cause the beast, as God puts it, "*to come to his end and no one will help him.*" It will be the beginning of the ultimate destruction of the beast through environmental and spiritual phenomena that will fully manifest itself during the final 3 ½ years of antichrist's rule.

How do we know for sure that this Gentile military presence spoken of in Daniel 11:45 is at the beginning of the Great Tribulation? We only have to read the next verse...

***Daniel 12:1*** Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands [guard] over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; [*speaking about the Great Tribulation*] and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. (italicized words added)

When this great persecution takes place, the archangel Michael will step in to help rescue the 144,000 righteous Jews and deliver them safely to Petra, situated in Edom. (Isa. 16:4; Isa. 33:15-16)

*What is the Great Tribulation? The Great Tribulation is a 3 ½ year time period of unparalleled persecution of both Jews and professing Christians.* It will begin with the abomination of desolation occurring on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and it will end with God's final punishment of Israel for its apostasy and rebellion toward Him. This is described in Isaiah 28:18-22:

**Isaiah 28:18** And your covenant with death shall be canceled, And your pact with Sheol shall not stand; When the overwhelming scourge passes through, Then you become its trampling [place.] **19** As often as it passes through, it will seize you. For morning after morning it will pass through, [anytime] during the day or night. And it will be sheer terror to understand what it means. **20** The bed is too short on which to stretch out, And the blanket is too small to wrap oneself in. **21** For the LORD will rise up as [at] Mount Perazim, He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon; To do His task, His unusual task, And to work His work, His extraordinary work [*chastising Israel through the armies of the beast*]. **22** And now do not carry on as scoffers, Lest your fetters be made stronger; For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts, Of decisive destruction on all the earth. (italicized words added)

How do we know this punishment will last for 3 ½ years? Look at Daniel 7:25...

**Daniel 7:25** And he [*the little horn*] will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time, (italicized words added)

A "time" is looked on in the Bible as a year, so this "time, times, and half a time" is the equivalent of 3 ½ years. This persecution and "wearing down of the saints" is going to take place through the changing of times and laws, thus allowing an all-out persecution to occur. This portion of Scripture I believe is being fulfilled even today with Congress and the President passing new anti-terrorism legislation in response to the terrorist attacks on our country in the past decade. Legislation in the bill from the Oklahoma City bombing provides an open door to make legal the

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infiltration and incarceration of those who the government decides are "questionable religious groups" or those who hold anti-big government sentiments. Citizens who are conservative, Bible-believers, or do not trust the government when it goes beyond its constitutional authority can be painted with a thick, wide brush as individuals who advocate violence and pose a threat to society. Even today, the government is leading the way with disinformation campaigns to vilify all Bible-believing Christians by connecting them with the radical fringe that espouses violence in order to "take back America." As a member of the body of Christ, you need to be clear about one thing – once we enter the Seventieth Week of Daniel there is no taking America back. America's future, and the future of the rest of the world is already written, and the future is destruction and judgment by the hand of Almighty God! Daniel 7:2 says the little horn is going to *wage war on the saints and overpower them*. Regardless of your political affiliation, the militia movement or anyone else that is what the Word of God says is going to happen and it will! What then is the proper response Christians should have toward this coming totalitarian rule? Scripture simply says,

**Rev. 13:10** Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison. Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword. This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently and remain faithful. (NLT)

Whatever hardships await the persecuted church, it is imperative that the saints remain faithful to receive their full reward. (Rev.14:12-13)

**Daniel 12:6** And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 'How long [will it be] until the end of [these] wonders?' 7 And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half [a time;] and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these [events] will be completed.

It will take 3 ½ years for the wonders to be completed and for the beast to finish scattering the power of the holy people. We can see this also from Revelation 13:5...

**Revelation 13:5** And there was given to him [*the beast*] a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months [*3 ½ years*] was given to him. (italicized words added)

Why is it called the Great Tribulation? Because it will be the most evil and demonic time in human history. Daniel 12:1 and Matthew 24:21, Scriptures we have already read numerous times, confirm this. Why is it going to be more horrible than any other time in history? Because Satan at this time will have been thrown out of heaven permanently and he and all his evil spirits will come upon earth having great wrath. These truths are covered in Revelation 12:7-12 and Revelation 17:8.

What is the purpose of the Great Tribulation? It will serve as a punishment to unfaithful Israel and the carnal church as God uses its fire to test and refine His people.<sup>19</sup> Look at Jeremiah 30:11-15, speaking to Israel:

**Jeremiah 30:11** 'For I am with you,' declares the LORD, 'to save you; For I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, Only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly, And will by no means leave you unpunished.' **12** For thus says the LORD, 'Your wound is incurable, And your injury is serious. **13** There is no one to plead your cause; [No] healing for [your] sore, No recovery for you. **14** All your lovers have forgotten you, They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the punishment of a cruel one, Because your iniquity is great And your sins are numerous. **15** Why do you cry out over your injury? Your pain is incurable. Because your iniquity is great And your sins are numerous, I have done these things to you.'

### ***The Believer's Hope***

What is the hope for Jews or Christians amidst this totally depressing scenario? Our hope is that we get *rescued* before the full brunt of the Great Tribulation hits. This is what God plans to do for those who are faithful to Him. Daniel 12:1 speaks of this...

**Daniel 12:1** Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands [guard] over the sons of your people, will arise. And

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there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time [*the time of the abomination of desolation of Dan. 11:45*] your people, **everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.** (italicized words added)

Who are these people, and what does it mean "everyone who is written in the book?" There are two groups of people that are rescued from the Great Tribulation. The first group is the 144,000 chosen Jews, made up of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.<sup>20</sup> They are rescued from the Great Tribulation and led away to safety in the wilderness. This truth is spoken of in Revelation 12:6:

**Revelation 12:6** And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

These 144,000 faithful Jews, are also known as "the woman."

**Revelation 12:14** And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, [*3 ½ years, the length of the Great Tribulation*] from the presence of the serpent. (italicized words added)

Verse 15 and 16 make reference as to how Satan tries to capture this special group of Jews.

**Revelation 12:15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.

We have already seen that armies of ungodly men were spoken of as floods. These armies will be pursuing the escaping Jews. We can read what happens to them...

**Revelation 12:16** And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

The earth is going to open up and swallow the vast hordes of armies that will be in pursuit of God's people. I believe this event is prophetically shown in Psalm 18.

**Psalm 18:4** The cords of death encompassed me, And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me. **5** The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. **6** In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him came into His ears.

These verses tell of some of the fears the 144,000 will have as they see the armies surround their city. They cry out for help and then witness what God does to the hostile armies.

**Psalm 18:7** Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry. **8** Smoke went up out of His nostrils, And fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by it. **9** He bowed the heavens also, and came down With thick darkness under His feet. **10** And He rode upon a cherub and flew; And He sped upon the wings of the wind. **11** He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. **12** From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, Hailstones and coals of fire. **13** The LORD also thundered in the heavens, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire. **14** And He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, And lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. **15** Then the channels of water appeared, And the foundations of the world were laid bare At Thy rebuke, O LORD, At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.

This show of power will be a spectacle beyond words as God Almighty glorifies Himself to His people.

**Psalm 18:16** He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters, **17** He delivered me from my strong enemy. And from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. **18** They confronted me in the day of my calamity; But the LORD was my stay. **19** He brought me

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forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

We see from this verse the joy the 144,000 experience after seeing God's protective power in full manifestation. The next few verses tell us *why* God saved them...

***Psalm 18:20*** The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. **21** For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. **22** For all His ordinances were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. **23** I was also blameless with Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. **24** Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes. **25** With the kind Thou dost show Thyself kind; With the blameless Thou dost show Thyself blameless; (emphasis added)

This military defeat witnessed by the world is going to cause the devil and the armies of the beast to wage war against Christians and the rest of the Jewish people with incredible vengeance.

***Revelation 12:17*** And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Where in the wilderness will these 144,000 Jews escape to? I believe God will cause them to flee to the ancient stone fortress of Petra, located south of the Dead Sea.<sup>21</sup> This can be seen from Isaiah 16...

***Isaiah 16:1*** Send the [tribute] lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela, [*the rock" is Petra*] by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion... **3** Cast your shadow like night at high noon; [*the darkness we read about in Ps. 18*] Hide the outcasts [*hide the 144,000 Jews as they flee*], do not betray the fugitive. **4** Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer [*the beast*]. (italicized words added)

These "outcasts" will have a hiding place from the "destroyer," and it will be in Petra. What is so special about Petra? It is a fortress carved out of solid rock with only a narrow entrance leading into its confines — a perfect sanctuary for the 144,000 during this time of persecution.

As mentioned previously, there are two groups of people that will be rescued from the Great Tribulation. The first are the 144,000 Jews and the second group are faithful Christians, those anxiously awaiting the return of Christ. In the context of Jesus Christ speaking about the armies coming upon Jerusalem and the horrors of the tribulation period soon to come, He says in verses 34 and 35 of Luke 21...

***Luke 21:34*** Be on guard, that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day come on you suddenly like a trap; **35** for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth. **36** But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to **escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.** (emphasis added)

Jesus Christ says His followers are to be alert and pray that they may be able to escape *all* these things that are about to take place and stand before the Son of man. The privilege of escaping the horrors of the Great Tribulation will come by way of "the gathering together", known also to Christians as the rapture. Jesus gave reference to this in the Gospel of Matthew.

***Matthew 24:22***...And unless those days had been cut short [*talking about the tribulation*], no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short. (italicized words added)

For the sake of the elect, the days will be cut short or "amputated." Who are the elect? We already know the 144,000 are, and if we look at Luke 12:36 we can see who the elect are according to Christ.

***Luke 12:36*** And be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open [the door] to him when he comes and knocks. [*When Christ comes, these people were said to be waiting expectantly for him*] **37** Blessed are those slaves

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whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself [to serve] and have them recline [at the table] and will come up and wait on them. (italicized words added)

Because of a believer's anticipation and watchfulness, he will be blessed by Christ and taken care of.

**Luke 12:38** Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds [them] so, blessed are those [slaves]. **39** And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. **40** You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect [*i.e. we are to stay watchful all the time*]. **41** And Peter said, 'Lord, are You addressing this parable to us, or to everyone [else] as well?' **42** And the Lord said, 'Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time? [*Jesus is addressing this to His disciples*] **43** Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. **44** Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **45** **But** if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, [both] men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; [*i.e. does not look for his master but instead gets involved in the pleasures and deceptions of the world*] **46** the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect [him,] and at an hour he does not know, **and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.** (italicized words and emphasis added)

Christ's teaching is obvious. Stay oblivious to the Master and you may end up in the Great Tribulation. This Scripture also shows us that Christ cannot rapture the faithful church well into the tribulation for then it would no longer be a surprise; for even the most wayward believer will know that judgment has begun during the Great Tribulation because we are told by Christ it will be the most traumatic time in human history. It says in the above verses that the Lord's return to gather His own comes at a time when people will still be unaware, and if his servant is caught

unaware and disobedient, the master will assign him a place with the unbelievers. What is that place? *It is staying on earth during the Great Tribulation.*

This amazing truth is laid out by Jesus Christ Himself as He addresses the seven churches in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation. Of all the churches addressed and chastised by the Lord for various levels of unbelief and unfaithfulness, Jesus Christ stops and gives only the church of Philadelphia this most wonderful and amazing promise:

***Revelation 3:7*** And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: **8** I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. **9** Behold, I will cause [those] of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you. **10** **Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that [hour] which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth.**

Jesus Christ says in verse 10, because these faithful believers have kept His word, He also will keep them from the hour of testing, that hour of testing which is about to come upon the whole world. What is the hour of testing? The Great Tribulation. Before we go any further, let's make sure we understand the meaning of these words.

### ***Protected by God***

The word "kept" is the word *tereo*, which means "attend to carefully, to guard, to watch over." Because those in the church of Philadelphia had kept, guarded and held fast to Christ's words, He says, "I also will keep you [*tereo*] from [*ek*] the hour of testing." This word *ek* is explained in *The Companion Bible* by E.W. Bullinger.

*Ek* governs only one case (the Genitive) and it denotes motion from the interior. It is used of time, place, and origin.

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It means "out from", as distinguished from *apo* which means "off," or "away from"...

Jesus Christ told the church of Philadelphia that because of their perseverance, He will keep and protect them from the interior of the Great Tribulation.

The word "testing" is the word *peirasmos* which means "temptation or putting to the proof." The Great Tribulation will be the "mother of all testing grounds," not only in terms of persecution for those who want to believe the Bible, but from temptations so strong and so beguiling that if possible they will deceive even the very elect. Those who are spared that testing are those who have already shown themselves to be faithful to Christ and His Word.

How will the faithful be raptured? By surprise, and before the full fury of the Great Tribulation begins.

**Matthew 24:36** But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. **37** For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. **38** For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, **39** and *they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away*; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. **40** Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. **41** Two women [will be] grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. **42** Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. **43** But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. **44** For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think [He will.] (emphasis added)

Christ made His coming analogous to a thief in the night. A thief comes in unawares, *takes what is valuable*, and then leaves. That is what Christ will do in the rapture. He will come by stealth, grab His faithful church, and leave the carnal, unfaithful church to be tested [*peirasmos*] by way of the Great Tribulation.

This record of "one will be taken the other left" coincides perfectly with the suddenness of the rapture as stated in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of [the] archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. **17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 15:51** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

But how do we *really know* we will be taken out before all hell breaks loose? Look at Luke 17:26-37.

**Luke 17:26** And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: **27** they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. [*Noah and his family were safe first, then the wrath came*] **28** It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; [*life was still relatively normal on earth at this time*] **29** but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. [*God escorted Lot to safety before He rained down judgment*] **30** It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. **31** On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. [*This is the same admonition that Christ gave when he spoke of the armies surrounding Jerusalem at the time of the abomination of desolation*] **32** Remember Lot's wife. **33** Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses [his life] shall preserve it. **34**

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I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left, [*the gathering together of the faithful church*] **35** There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. **36** Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left. **37** And answering they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body [is], there also will the vultures be gathered.' (italicized words added)

These are comforting verses for the born-again believer who is faithfully standing and waiting for the Lord's return. There is a sad side to Christ's return though, and it is addressed many times by Jesus Christ through the use of parables — stories that illustrate profound truth. We see such an instance in Luke 12:35.

**Luke 12:35** Be dressed in readiness, and [keep] your lamps alight... [*Christ goes on to speak about the faithful slave who was alert and waiting for his master*] **45** But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' [*remember this is referring not to an unbeliever, but one who was serving his Master*] and begins to beat the slaves, [both] men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk; **46** the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect [him,] and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers. **47** And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes... (italicized words added)

The slave, or in this case, the believer in Christ, who neither expects nor desires his Master's return and continues in flagrant disobedience will find that his portion is with the unbelievers during the tribulation period. In Matthew 24, Christ speaks solely about the end of the age and at the end of the chapter He urges His disciples to be ready and alert for His return. He then continues to teach on the same theme throughout Matthew 25 with more parables.<sup>23</sup> For instance, the parable of the ten virgins...

**Matthew 25:1** Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went

out to meet the bridegroom. **2** And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. **3** For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, **4** but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps [*they were ready and prepared*]. **5** Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and [began] to sleep. **6** But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet [him.]' **7** Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. **8** And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' **9** But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you [too;] go instead to the dealers and buy [some] for yourselves.' **10** And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut [*the rapture*]. **11** And later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' **12** But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

In the eyes of Christ, "getting it together" spiritually at the last minute after you have been sleeping around with the rest of the world is not going to work. He says this in Matthew 7:21-27...

**Matthew 7:21** Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. **22** Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' **23** And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness. **24** Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. **25** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and [yet] it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. **26** And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. **27** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall.

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From the words uttered by the Lord Himself, every Christian should look within their heart and ask themselves the questions — "Am I part of the church of Philadelphia?" "Have I kept, guarded, and held fast to Christ's words in my life?" "Am I looking for and anxiously awaiting His return, or am I tied to and in love with this world?" If you are a Christian and have taken the sacrifice of Christ lightly by relegating your life to one of silence and indifference to the things of God, I urge you, as a brother in Christ, to seriously ponder this message. Jesus Christ our Master is coming soon. Are you ready and watching? If not, prepare now so you will not have to face *"that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth."* (Rev. 3:10)