

# THE GREAT TRIBULATION

## CHAPTER ONE

### Prophetic Event Number Two

Following the Rapture of the Church prophetic event number two will begin. As we begin the lessons on the second prophetic event of the future, the “Great Tribulation,” we do so knowing that it is a very unpopular subject. Although it is not a pleasant subject to teach, it is one that must be taught. An understanding of the future program that God has for this world will help in our understanding of the Word of God.

Before we begin these lessons on “The Great Tribulation” there is one question that must be answered; was the prophecy given by Jesus, in Matthew chapter twenty four, fulfilled in 70 AD when Titus destroyed Jerusalem? By no stretch of the imagination can one say that it was.

First, the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 AD, was regional only. It was only one area. The Tribulation will include the whole world. Second, Jesus said that He would appear immediately after the Tribulation.

**“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:  
And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:29, 30)**

There are a number of descriptive terms used to describe the Tribulation. When we refer to the Tribulation we are talking about a seven-year period of time following the Rapture of the Church; described by Jesus in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, in answer to the disciple’s question, “When shall these things be?”

**“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.  
For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.  
And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.  
For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.  
All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:4-8)**

**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be.  
And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be**

**shortened.” (Matthew 24: 21, 22)**

This description given by our Lord fits like a glove the eyewitness account given by John, in Revelation, chapter six through chapter nineteen.

In the Old Testament the most common term used to describe this event is “the day of the Lord.” Whenever the expression “the day of the Lord” appears in Scripture it is referring to the period of time that begins with the Rapture of the Church, and includes all that follows. This period of time is also called “the day of Jacob’s trouble; primarily because Israel will be under the chastening hand of God to bring them to Himself. This day is also called “a day of darkness,” and the “day of the vengeance of our God.” However, it is best known to us by the New Testament terms, “The Tribulation” and “The Great Tribulation.” In order that we might see the awesome horror of this dreadful day, Jesus said, “there has never been a day like it before and will never be again.”

Although a description of the Tribulation period is mentioned by almost all of the Old Testament prophets, the most descriptive and highly detailed account is given in the book of Revelation. Fourteen of the twenty-two chapters of this book deal with this seven-year period.

The detailed account of the Tribulation period in Revelation is divided into two parts, each being three and one-half years in duration. The first half is referred to as “the Tribulation.” The last half is called “the Great Tribulation.” We will see why as we progress in our study of this great prophetic event.

The Tribulation deals primarily with three world wars: thus fulfilling the words of Jesus that there shall be “wars and rumors of wars.” There are four world wars clearly defined in the Word of God which are yet in the future. We will give a brief outline here, and fill in the details as we progress in our study of what the Bible calls “The Great Tribulation.”

The first battle will follow the Rapture of the Church, when the Antichrist is revealed appearing on a white horse, (Revelation chapter six). The second battle will be the battle of Gog and Magog, when the kings of the North, along with at least five other countries invade the land of Israel, (Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39), and will be defeated by the Antichrist and his forces, (Daniel 11:44).

The third battle will follow closely, the battle between the kings of the North and the Antichrist, and is called “the battle of Armageddon.” These two battles are so closely associated that they are often mentioned in the same chapter. By drawing some parallels the student of the Bible will be able to see the difference.

The fourth battle will follow the battle of Armageddon by one-thousand years, and will come at the end of the world

**What is the Purpose of the Tribulation?**

There are at least four reasons, given in Scripture, for the Tribulation. First, the primary purpose of the Tribulation is to prepare the nation of Israel for her Messiah.

**“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.**

**And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and**

**there will I plead with you face to face.  
Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the  
land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.  
And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring  
you into the bond of the covenant:  
And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them  
that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of  
the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter  
into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the  
Lord.” (Ezekiel 20:34-38)**

This Scripture states the manner in which God will deal with His people. Because of the severe persecution Israel will turn to God.

The second purpose of the Tribulation is to bring judgment upon unbelieving men and nations.

**“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations  
that forget God.” (Psalm 9:17)**

Revelation, chapter three, verse ten, shows that this is a time of judgment upon nations.

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

God has a time and place when He will judge the world, including the United States of America. This fact is also stated in the twenty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah.

**“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth  
from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be  
raised up from the coasts of the earth.  
And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one  
end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth:  
they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried;  
they shall be dung upon the ground.” (Jeremiah 25:32,33)**

Isaiah, chapter twenty-six, gives added evidence to this truth.

**“For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the  
inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also  
shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”  
(Isaiah 26:21)**

The third reason for the severity of the Tribulation is that the Devil will not give up the control of his domain without a struggle.

**“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe  
to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is**

**come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” (Revelation 12:12)**

There is not one nation on the face of the earth, even our own country, where God is honored for who He is.

To fully understand the true nature of the Tribulation we must look at the fourth reason. We see this in the following Scriptures.

**“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” (Romans 12:19)**

**“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,  
And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,  
In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
(II Thessalonians 1:6-8)**

The wrath of God is mentioned, from Revelation chapter six through Revelation chapter nineteen some ten times. 1. “...hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16b). 2. “For the great day of his wrath is come...” (Rev. 6:17a). 3. “...and thy wrath is come...” (Rev. 11:18a). 4. “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...” (Rev. 14:10a). 5. “...cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” (Rev. 14:19b). 6. “...for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” (Rev. 15:1b). 7. “...seven golden vials full of the wrath of God...” (Rev. 15:7) 8. “...pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Rev. 16:1b). 9. “...the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath” (Rev. 16:19b). 10. “...and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God” (Rev. 19:15b). By the oft repeated phrase “the wrath of God” we get some idea of the fierceness of the Tribulation.

We see in the book of Luke, chapter nine, why this “wrath of God” has not been unleashed in the dispensation of grace.

**“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?  
But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.  
For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” (Luke 9:54-56)**

The mission of our Lord is to save. He is not willing that any should perish. **“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)** God would be just and right to bring judgment now, as the Psalmist says, **“God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.” (Psalms 7:11)**

We see, then, that there is going to be a “payday” coming as there was in Noah’s day. There is coming a day and hour when God says “that’s enough!”

**“And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” (Genesis 6:3)**

## CHAPTER TWO

### God’s Wrath Revealed

There are three recorded events that define how God’s wrath will be revealed.

1. Opening of the seven seals (Rev. ch. 6).
2. Sounding of the seven trumpets (Rev. ch. 8).
3. Pouring of the seven vials of the wrath of God (Rev. ch. 16).

Before we get to the opening of the first seal, as in all drama, there is the main character that should be identified. The primary character of this time of sorrow is called “the man of sin, the son of perdition.”

**“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” (II Thessalonians 2:3)**

In Revelation this “man of sin” is called the “dragon” thirteen times. Revelation chapter twenty, verse two, leaves no doubt as to who this “dragon” is.

**“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:2)**

### Satan’s Masterpiece

Throughout the Bible the “dragon” is also identified as Satan’s masterpiece. Immediately following the Rapture of the Church there will appear on the scene a man of power and authority, who will be Satan’s masterpiece of imitation; imitating the program of God. Many names and titles are given to this individual who is given over completely to Satan, to do his bidding.

Arthur W. Pink, in his book “The Antichrist,” gives a list of at least twenty six names that are applicable to Satan. Here are just a few. He is called “the bloody and deceitful man” (Psalm 5:6), “the wicked one” (Psalm 10:2-4), “the man of the earth” (Psalm 10:18), “the mighty man” (Psalm 52:1), “the enemy” (Psalm 55:3), “the adversary” (Psalm 74:8-10), “the violent man” (Psalm 140:11), “the Assyrian” (Isa. 10:5-7), “the spoiler” (Isa. 16:4 and Jer. 6:26), “the nail” (Isa. 22:25), “the branch of the terrible ones” (Isa. 25:5), “the profane wicked prince of Israel” (Ezek. 21:25), “the little horn” (Dan. 7:8), “a vile person” (Dan 11:21), “the idol shepherd” (Zech 11:16,17), “the man of sin” (II Thess. 2:3), “the son of perdition” (II Thess. 2:3), “the working of Satan” (II Thess 2:9), “the Antichrist” (I John 2:22), “the angel of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 9:11), and “the beast” (Rev. 11:7). To these could be added “the one coming in his own name” (John 5:43), “the king of fierce countenance” (Dan. 8:23), “the desolator” (Dan. 9:27), and “the abomination of desolation” (Matt. 24:15). It is possible to see just how extensive the revelation is concerning this individual.

The “man of sin,” the Antichrist, will have two accomplices. They are called “the beast out of the sea,” the political head of the federation of ungodly nations, and “the beast out of the land,” the religious leader. These two work in concert with the Antichrist to gain control of the whole world.

The Tribulation begins with the opening of the first of seven seals, Revelation, chapter six, verse two. The first glimpse of the “man of sin,” the “dragon,” is a rider on a white horse.

**“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” (Revelation 6:2)**

At first glance one might assume that this is the return of the Lord, and that is exactly what Satan wants people to believe. Notice the similarity, comparing his arrival with that of the Lord Jesus Christ in the following Scripture.

**“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” (Revelation 19:11)**

Satan is a master of imitation. That is why Jesus gave this warning.

**“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.” (Mathew 24:4)**

Deception has always been a major tool of the Devil.

**“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (II Corinthians 11:13-15)**

For added proof of Satan’s ability to deceive we read:

**“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:21-23)**

Satan’s appearing on a white horse speaks of peace and victory. The bow speaks of power. The absence of arrows suggests that the rider will pose as a peaceful leader. The crown speaks of authority. The phrase “to conquer” indicates the temporary success of his plan.

## False Peace

The rider on the white horse of Revelation, chapter 6, is none other than the Antichrist himself, the false Messiah. The white horse represents peace. He comes in the disguise of offering world peace. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says:

**“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (I Thessalonians 5:3)**

Jesus repeatedly warned of false Christs who come to offer peace.

**“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” (Matthew 24:24-26)**

It will be easy for the Antichrist to deceive, for there will be no opposition from believers, who some call fundamental crackpots, for they will have been taken up in the Rapture.

The false peace offered by the rider on the white horse will be of short duration. After he has convinced the world that the golden age of peace has come, he will loose his fury upon the unsuspecting nations, the nations that will not accept him as the Messiah, and plunge the world into war. This is made evident with the opening of the second seal.

Although the Antichrist presents himself as a man of peace, the following three descriptions belie his claim. The following three riders are still the Antichrist, and are a complete contradiction of what is represented by the rider on the white horse.

With the opening of the second seal there appears a rider on a red horse which introduces us to the first of the three world wars that will take place during the Tribulation. The promise of peace and safety, by the first rider, is soon shattered by the appearance of the rider on the red horse.

**“And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” (Revelation 6: 3,4)**

The words, “to take peace from the earth,” are a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus, in Matthew.

**“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” (Matthew 24:6)**

## War, Famine and Death

After having deceived the major portion of the world, the Antichrist begins to reveal his true colors. That is, he will not stop short of attaining complete control and the worship of all mankind. The extreme measures taken by the Antichrist, to gain this end, is revealed by the following riders on the last two horses.

Following this war, depicted by the red horse, comes the opening of the third seal, and we see a rider on a black horse.

**“And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.**

**And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny; and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” (Revelation 6:5,6)**

From this description we can easily identify the black horse and its rider. The black horse typifies the scourge of famine and inflation. The severity of conditions is revealed by the presence of balances. Everything must be weighed.

After the Church has been removed, there will be a false peace of short duration, followed by war and the greatest famine of all time.

The shortage of food, combined with greed, produces a rate of inflation greater than we have ever known. Inflation will be so great it will take a full day’s wages to buy a loaf of bread. Only the very rich will escape the severe suffering of this famine. Oil and wine are symbols of wealth; thus the meaning of “hurt not the oil and the wine.”

We see, when the fourth seal is opened, that following closely to the black horse of famine and inflation comes the pale horse of death.

**“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” (Revelation 6:8)**

The pale horse of death is a fulfillment of the prophecy in Matthew, chapter twenty four.

**“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famine, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.” (Matthew 24:7)**

The word “death” is a fitting description of the pale horse and its rider. One fourth of the world’s population will perish in the first assault of the Antichrist. And this is only the beginning. Before the Tribulation is over a great portion of the world’s population will have perished. Twenty-five percent will die during the opening of the fourth seal alone.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Seals

The opening of the fifth seal gives us a glimpse into Heaven. John sees, under the altar, the souls of those who were martyred for their testimony. They are assured that they have not died in vain.

With the opening of the sixth seal, we see a notable increase in the tempo and severity of the judgment falling upon this earth. Here is the record.

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

Between the opening of the sixth and seventh seal we find a parenthetical pause. God calls a halt to the terrible destruction. He makes sure that a remnant is sealed.

**“Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Revelation 7:3)**

Revelation, chapter seven, verses four through eight, tells us exactly who these are that are sealed. There is absolutely no mystery as to who the one hundred and forty four thousand are that are sealed. The language is so plain and simple it needs no interpretation. They are twelve thousand each from the twelve tribes of Israel. Romans, chapter nine, verse twenty-seven, tells us why they are sealed.

**“Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.” (Romans 9:27)**

We are told what this seal is in Revelation, chapter fourteen, verse one.

**“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” (Revelation 14:1)**

In this interval we are given another vital statistic, that a number of Gentiles will be saved.

**“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;” (Revelation 7:9)**

**“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?**

**And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:13,14)**

With the opening of the seventh seal there is a half-hour of silence.

**“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” (Revelation 8:1)**

This is probably the longest period of silence there has ever been in Heaven. With the blowing of the first trumpets we get some idea for the silence.

Before the first trumpet sounds God gives assurance to the saints that their long awaited prayers of “thy Kingdom come” will be answered.

**“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.**

**And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.**

**And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angels hand.**

**And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.**

**And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” (Revelation 8:2-6)**

With the sound of the first trumpet, in Revelation chapter eight, verse seven, there will be “hail and fire mixed with blood” and a third part of the trees was burned up and all of the green grass was burned up. This judgment will destroy a third of all growing vegetation on the earth. This will be an absolute nightmare for all environmentalists.

We see in the blowing of the second, third and fourth trumpets that the judgment gets progressively worse. Yet the wrath of God is not finished. The blowing of the final three trumpets gets even worse.

**“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst**

**of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”**  
**(Revelation 8:13)**

To get some idea of what the three “woes” mean read Revelation, chapter nine, verses one through six, and Revelation chapter eleven, verses eleven to nineteen.

The blowing of the sixth trumpet concludes the first half (three and one-half years) of the Tribulation. The introduction of the two witnesses opens the last three and one-half years, of what is called “The Great Tribulation.”

**“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” (Revelation 11:3)**

Satan is given power in the Tribulation that he has not had since losing his power, when he and a number of angels rebelled against God, before God created man. Even though he is “the god of this world,” God has limited his power.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Seventh Trumpet

With the blowing of the seventh trumpet, God begins a campaign to take back control of this earth from Satan. Here we see Satan in control:

**“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Revelation 13:7)**

The Antichrist will be in complete control with one exception.

**“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Revelation 13:8)**

If your name is not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, if you survive the Tribulation, you will worship the Devil.

Although Satan has all of the unsaved worshipping him, he does not intend to give up until he has those who are saved during the Tribulation worshipping him as well. In his efforts to accomplish this, he comes up with the most diabolical scheme ever devised.

**“And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:  
And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; his number is Six hundred and threescore and six.”**

**(Revelation 13:16-18)**

Much has been said about what the “mark of the beast” is, but precious little is said about “why” the mark is given in the first place. We are told the mark is “666.” We are also told that it is “the number of man.” Six is the number of man. Three is the number of Divinity. The “mark,” then, is nothing more than just a man claiming to be God. Therefore, we must emphasize “why” the mark is given, rather than what it is. It was given to force the saved of the Tribulation to worship the false imposter, Satan.

The pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of God, in Revelation chapter sixteen, signals the beginning of the end of the Tribulation.

There are four battles mentioned in the Word of God that are still in the future, which brings us to the second battle of the Tribulation, the battle between the kings of the North and the kings of the South and the Antichrist. Very little information is given on this battle in Revelation. However, there is a clear and defined revelation of this event given in Ezekiel, chapters thirty eight and thirty nine, and in Daniel chapter eleven. Just before the battle of Armageddon, the kings of the North along with at least five other countries: **“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee.”** (Ezekiel 38:5,6) will invade the land of Palestine.

**“And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land.”** (Ezekiel 38:15, 16a)

There is no doubt as to the identity of Gog and Magog. “Gog” means “prince,” and “Magog” means “his land.” It can be none other than modern day Russia. Towards the end of the Tribulation God is going to force Russia to invade Israel.

**“And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into they jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.”** (Ezekiel 38:4)

In verse sixteen God says: “...I will bring thee against my land...” There will be only a token opposition by four nations.

**“Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?”** (Ezekiel 38:13)

When the kings of the North prepare for this invasion, God will then disarm them.

**“And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause**

**thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand.” (Ezekiel 39:3)**

The Antichrist hears of this invasion while looting the treasures of Egypt.

**“But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.” (Daniel 11:43, 44)**

It will be fairly easy for the Antichrist to destroy the northern confederacy . It will be so complete that only a sixth part will be able to escape. **“And I will turn thee back, and leave but a sixth part of thee...” (Ezekiel 39:2a)** It will take seven months to bury the dead. **“And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land.” (Ezekiel 39:12)** The problem of burying the dead will be so great that they will have to conscript, or select, priests and acting priests from those who are just passing through, to help. “Sever” means “select,” and “continual” means “priest, or acting priest.”

**“And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search.” (Ezekiel 39:14)**

The pouring out of the first five vials of the wrath of God contains plagues similar to those visited upon Egypt; however, the difference is one of scope and intensity. The plagues in Pharaoh’s day were limited to the land of Egypt. Those described in Revelation, chapter sixteen will be world wide.

The beginning of the third battle in the Tribulation, with the pouring out of the sixth vial, we see the preparation for the most well known battle in history, prophetic event number three, the battle of Armageddon. This is perhaps the most debated Bible topic of the day. With all of the debate, what do you know or understand about the battle of Armageddon? For instance do you know:

- (1) When the battle will take place?
- (2) Where the battle will take place?
- (3) Who the participants will be, or what nations will be involved?
- (4) What weapons will be used?
- (5) Who will be the final Victor?

The answer to all five questions is found in just nine verses, in Revelation chapter sixteen, that take about two minutes or less to read.

**“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and**

**keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.**

**And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.**

**And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.**

**And there were voices and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.**

**And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” (Revelation 16:13-21)**

**“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:21)**

Now you may ask, “If it is so simple, why is there so much confusion on this subject?” I don’t know. I could only guess. Perhaps the biggest reason some who are attempting to explain this subject are not born again.

**“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”  
(I Corinthians 2:14)**

Jesus gave the answer to “when” this battle would be fought when the disciples asked Him.

**“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3)**

In the following twenty three verses, of Matthew chapter twenty four, Jesus gives a graphic detailed description of the Great Tribulation. We read in verses twenty nine and thirty of Matthew chapter twenty four:

**“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:  
And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:**

**and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24: 29,30)**

We see from these Scriptures that this battle will take place at the end of the Tribulation, with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is in complete harmony with Revelation, chapter nineteen, verse twenty one. It will be the Lord himself who brings a conclusion to this battle as well as the Tribulation itself.

The answer to “where” this battle will be fought is simple.

**“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” (Revelation 16:16)**

“Armageddon” means “the hills of Megiddo.” This is a region north of Palestine, a vast plain called “the valley of Jehoshaphat.” Any other place where a vast army assembles, other than the place identified here, is not the battle of Armageddon.

We come now to the third question, who are the nations involved? There is one verse that identifies the participants in this great battle.

**“For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (Revelation 16:14)**

It will be the kings of the earth and of the whole world gathered to do battle with Almighty God. If we take the Bible for what it says in plain language, we have no trouble at all understanding these Scriptures.

It is very important to note that this will not be a conventional war of nation against nation; it will be a war of all of the nations against God.

The fourth question, what weapons will be used in this battle? Strange as it may seem there is no mention of weapons. Not one round is fired by any of the nations mentioned. Although this is built up in the minds of many people that this is the mother of all battles, it will be the most one-sided battle ever fought, apart from the end-time battle that comes at the end of the one thousand years reign of Christ. God’s weapons are clearly outlined in the following Scriptures.

**“And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings;  
and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.  
And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.  
And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.  
And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed**

**God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” (Revelation 16:18-21)**

We see from this that God will not need man’s help. His weapons are as old as time. Thunder and lightening and one of the greatest earthquakes of all time, with hail stones weighing over one hundred pounds, will accomplish much of what God intended. The remnant that survives will be slain by the return of the Lord.

**“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:21)**

As to the fifth question, there is never any doubt as to the final outcome of this battle. God will be the Victor. This brings to an end the battle of Armageddon, as well as the Tribulation itself.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Second Coming

We come now to prophetic event number four, the second coming of our Lord. There are many, many passages concerning this event. The “second coming” is mentioned some one hundred and fifty times after Pentecost, in the book of Acts and throughout the rest of the New Testament. No better description can be found than that found in Revelation, chapter nineteen, verse eleven.

**“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.” (Revelation 19:11)**

When Jesus appears there are number of events that will take place in rapid succession.

- (1) The beast and the false prophet will become the first occupants of Hell, for which it was prepared.

**“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Revelation 19:20)**

- (2) Hell was not prepared for mankind.

**“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)**

- (3) There is no special place for the unbeliever.

**“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them.” (Revelation 20:11)**

(4) Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. **“...I go to prepare a place for you...” (John 14:2)** It is prepared only for those who have “believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

**“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20:21)**

(5) When Jesus appears He is going to end the battle of Armageddon, as well as the Tribulation. He will slay the ones that remain, or survive the judgment of the earthquake and hailstones.

**“And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” (Revelation 19:21)**

(6) Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for one thousand years.

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

(7) The Judgment of the Nations. The judgment of the nations must be distinguished from the Great White Throne Judgment. Here there is no resurrection. No books are opened. Not individuals but nations are judged, presented as sheep, brethren and goats. The place is on earth, not the Great White Throne of God. The time is immediately following the return of Christ; not at the end of the one thousand years reign of Christ.

**“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (Matthew 25: 31,32)**

The test will be the treatment of the brethren, the nation of Israel.

**“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)**

Then will come the resurrection of the martyred saints of the Tribulation, which will complete what the Bible calls “the first resurrection.”

**“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a**

**thousand years.  
But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.  
Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4-6)**

The Bible teaches that you will meet God in one of two ways. You will meet the Lord here as Saviour, or you will meet Him one thousand years later as your Judge. If you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you will be “presented” before the presence of His glory.

**“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” (Jude 1:24)**

The word “faultless” means “unblemished, or without blame.” Just think of it, the believer will be “presented without sin or blame.” This is accomplished by “receiving” the One who is sinless, “unblemished and without blame,” the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if you chose to reject the free gift of salvation, you will “fall into the hands of the living God.” **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?” (Hebrews 10:31)**

To be “presented” you must be “presented as a son.” To become a son you must receive Christ as your Saviour.

**“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12)**

You can choose to “fall,” which is a fearful thing, into the hands of the living God by doing nothing. The decision is yours, whether you “fall” or whether you are “presented.”

#### The First Resurrection

In this, the closing lesson in this series, I would like to cover what makes up, what the Bible calls, “the first resurrection.”

**“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6)**

The Lord Jesus was the first person in history to be raised from the dead, never to die again. There were those who were raised from the dead before the resurrection of the Lord, however, this was not a resurrection but a restoration of life, subsequently they died again.

The Lord Jesus was the first ever to be resurrected; and by his resurrection we are assured that:

- (1) Every sin was paid for in full.
- (2) The believer stands before God, perfect.
- (3) One day all believers will be raised from the dead and receive a glorified, perfect body, never to die again.

**“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28, 29)**

In these verses we see a number of interesting facts.

- (1) There will be a resurrection.
- (2) It will be a resurrection of every person, “all that are in the graves.”
- (3) It will be a bodily resurrection.
- (4) The resurrection includes both the saved and the unsaved.

If this was the only revelation concerning the resurrection we would naturally assume that one day there would be a general resurrection of both the saved and the unsaved. However, this is not the case at all. John, chapter five, verses twenty eight and twenty nine states only that there will be a resurrection; but gives nothing of the order in which the resurrection of the “believers” and the “unbelievers” takes place. For this we must turn to another portion of Scripture.

Before we turn to the Scripture that sheds a great deal of light on this subject let me briefly give the order in which the resurrection of the saved and unsaved will take place.

- (1) There was a resurrection of the saints when Jesus was raised from the dead.
- (2) There will be a resurrection of the saints at the Rapture of the Church.
- (3) Some seven years after the Rapture, when the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom, there will be a resurrection of the saints who have been martyred during the Tribulation.

(These three resurrections of the saints make up what the Bible calls the “first resurrection.”)

- (4) One thousand years later all unbelievers of all ages will be raised to face the awesome Great White Throne Judgment.

Let us go back and put chapter and verse with what we have just said.

**“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;  
afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.  
Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the  
kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put  
down all rule and all authority and power.”  
(I Corinthians 15:22-24)**

Here Paul gives in plain language the order of the resurrections. Not all of the saints will be raised at the same time. The Bible teaches three separate resurrections for

the saints. These will take place at different periods in history. Here is the order in which Paul records them. Paul says, "Christ the firstfruits." Who is Paul referring to in this statement? One word holds the key to the correct interpretation to this verse, the word "firstfruits."

**"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (I Corinthians 15:20)**

#### Identifying the Firstfruits

The same word is repeated in verse twenty three ---"But every man in his own order: Christ the "firstfruits." The word "firstfruits" is not singular, but plural. Christ was not the only one who was resurrected at this time; although He was first, to be sure.

**"And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;  
And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,  
And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matthew 27:51-53)**

This resurrection (the firstfruits) of the saints is in perfect harmony with the rest of the Bible, and is a literal fulfillment of the feast of firstfruits, observed by Israel centuries ago. The firstfruits of the harvest were brought to the Priest to be waved before the Lord as an expression of gratitude, and were only a token of the expectation of a full harvest to come. A description of this event is recorded in Leviticus.

**"And the lord spake unto Moses, saying,  
Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:  
And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." (Leviticus 23:9-11)**

The fulfillment of this celebration is history. The "resurrection of the firstfruits" also took place some two thousand years ago when the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, followed by the resurrection of "many of the saints." Some believe that these saints were only restored to life, as was Lazarus, and therefore died again. However, there is not one shred of evidence to support this claim.

The wave-sheaf of Leviticus, chapter twenty three, is a picture, a type, or more specifically a "prophecy" of the resurrection of Christ. A sheaf implies "plurality." It was a single "corn of wheat" that fell into the ground; however, it was a sheaf that came forth.

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it**

**bringeth forth much fruit.” (John 12:24)**

The saints who were resurrected, following the resurrection of Christ, became the “firstfruits;” therefore assuring a future resurrection. Keep in mind, only believers were raised at that time. No unsaved are among the firstfruits. The Holy Spirit is careful to point out “and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.”

**“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”**  
**(I Thessalonians 4:13-17)**

Again we see only “believers” resurrected. All of those who are a part of this resurrection are believers, identified by the terms that only apply to the saved----“they that are Christ’s at his coming,” “and the dead in Christ shall rise first,” “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again.”

So far we have seen the resurrection of the “firstfruits,” that took place some two thousand years ago, and the resurrection of “they that are Christ’s at his coming,” which may take place at any moment.

There is one more resurrection of “believers” which will take place some seven years after the Rapture, at the end of the Tribulation.

**“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”** (Revelation 20:4-6)

This resurrection consists of those who were martyred during the Tribulation period. Again we see that only “believers” are raised.

In these three resurrections not one single unsaved person has been resurrected; only those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The “resurrection of the firstfruits” (Matthew 27:50-53), the “resurrection that takes place at the Rapture” (I Thessalonians 4:13-17), and the “resurrection of the martyrs of the Tribulation” (Revelation 20:4-6), make up what the Bible calls “the first resurrection.”

The resurrection of the unsaved will take place one thousand years after the first resurrection. There are two resurrections, the “saved” and the “unsaved.” You will be in one or the other of them, and only YOU can chose which one. In closing let me give a comparison of the two resurrections.

The resurrection of the unsaved:

**“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.**

**And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20: verses 11 and 15)**

The resurrection of the saved:

**“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)**

