**PREFACE**

Love. God began with it, and He will end with it. When studying and researching the Bible concerning the end-time, it is shocking to see the number of verses about love. Sadly, most people’s love will grow cold leading up to and during the Tribulation and Second Coming of Jesus (Matthew 24:12). Knowing the signs before this time, being prepared, and not being caught off guard will help sustain our love for Christ and others.

This book has four primary purposes: One, to present a clear and theologically sound understanding of end-time prophecies. Two, to prepare us for the Tribulation. Three, to radically change our lives and get us ready as a holy people for Christ’s return and thereby have Him glorified in us. And four, to love like never before.

When we look at the society breaking down around us, many ask if we are approaching the end of time that the Bible addresses. When looking at scripture and current events, we could very well be on the cusp of the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ. Also, if the Bible and early church are correct, the Tribulation is nearer than we may think. There is no more critical issue of our time.

Jesus warned us not to be confused about the end-time. “Watch out that no one deceives you” (Matthew 24:4a). Not being deceived and knowing the times are important to keep the thief (Satan) out of our hearts (Matthew 24:43). Jesus stated in the Gospel according to Mark that He wanted all of us to watch for His return. “If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” (Mark 13:36–37).

Sadly, most of us do not know the signs to watch for, and many will be “sleeping” and not be awake when Jesus returns. This book covers what the Bible says about these signs and what we need to know about being prepared for the Tribulation and Christ’s Second Coming.

In twenty years of study, I have found that most prophecy books are hard to understand for the average reader. Much of what prophecy teachers instruct about the end-time has been erroneous, especially in the West. Books on the subject can be long and laborious and focus specifically on a single issue. They do not give practical advice for us to follow based on their teaching. My goal is to have one book that would provide readers with a firm foundation of the significant issues of prophecy that affect their lives and to offer direction regarding what to do about it. This book is for those who do not have time to sort through vast amounts of documents and books to discern end-time issues.

The study of prophecy can seem overwhelming. So many of us do not seek or know what to watch for and expect. It is easy to adopt the “que sera, sera” attitude. This book takes complex and challenging topics of prophecy and simplifies them into an easily understood language in a condensed format. Simplifying prophecy will result in a better understanding of the end-time. We will discern whether we are approaching them and how we should respond.

Understanding prophecy will also help us become approved workpeople who correctly handle the word of truth. Paul calls us to this high ground in 2 Timothy 2:14–18. Finally, God’s prophetic message is entirely accurate, and we are to study and pay attention to it until Christ returns (2 Peter 1:19).

Chapter 1 is the “Why should I even care?” chapter. It will cover why it is essential to study the end-time. Chapter 2 shows the validity of the Bible in foretelling the future. Chapter 3 reveals how to find prophetic truth in the Bible. Chapter 4 shows emphatically that the church and unbelievers will go through the entire Tribulation, the most trying time in world history. Chapter 5 shows the error of those who believe Jesus will take the church out of this world before the Tribulation, which shockingly is the dominant view of pastors in the United States. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss whether the Tribulation already happened or whether prophecy about the end-time has evolved over history. Chapter 8 discusses what events will occur before the Tribulation and which countries will be involved. It also covers when these events might occur. Chapter 9 covers the reasons for the Tribulation. Chapter 10 discusses whether the Antichrist will be Islamic, European, or Jewish. It also covers the Antichrist’s actions and mark of the Beast. Chapter 11 elaborates on what occurs during the Tribulation, according to the Old and New Testaments. Chapter 12 covers the events surrounding the return of Christ to earth. Chapter 13 describes Christ’s subsequent reign here on earth for one thousand years (millennium) and eternity. Finally, chapter 14 is the “What am I going to do about it?” chapter. It explains how the Bible tells us to prepare for the times ahead.

We’ll also explain the roles of Israel and the Islamic nations in the end-time. Is the United States mentioned in prophecy? Will the Jews experience another dispersion? Should Christians arm themselves? Who might Mystery Babylon be? Is a vaccine or a computer chip the mark of the Beast? Who gets rewards when Christ returns, and what are they? What will eternity be like, where will we spend it, and will we be reunited with our loved ones?

This book will encourage readers to critically think about and decipher fact from fiction from the many voices of prophecy in existence today. We will see how current events in our world are shaping up just as the Bible predicted. Because there are so many scriptures surrounding the end-time that talk about keeping our love on, readers will be encouraged to display greater love for those around them, including their families and even their enemies. Like good runners in a marathon, we will be prepared to make it to the finish line with a great reward.

This book stems from three sources: the leading of the Holy Spirit, the teaching of the early church, and scripture.

Concerning the time surrounding His return, Christ encouraged us not to be troubled (Matthew 24:6) because He had told us to anticipate these events (Matthew 24:25). According to scripture, what we know affects what we do and believe about the Second Coming and will have eternal consequences (1 Timothy 4:1).

According to J. Barton Payne, a former professor at Wheaton College, one-quarter of the Bible is prophecy. He said there are eight times as many prophecies related to the Second Coming as those related to the first. The Second Coming is the most talked about event in scripture.1

Jesus grieved over Jerusalem because people did not see the signs of His First Coming. How much more will it hurt His heart if we do not discern the time surrounding His Second Coming? The consequence of missing His First Coming was that the Romans would eventually destroy Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44). The ramifications for us missing the Second Coming will have even more tragic consequences not only in this life but in the life to come.

Those who watch for His return to earth will be blessed mightily. In Luke 12:37, Christ says: “It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table, and will come and wait on them.” This verse is shocking: In addition to us serving and worshiping Jesus when He returns, He will also serve us if we are watching when He comes.

The book will also equip pastors with the tools to give their flocks good “food at the proper time” and avoid the consequences of failing to do so (Matthew 24:45–51).

Suppose we see world events unfolding that coincide with the Bible’s teaching of signs leading up to the Tribulation. In that case, we are at the door of the Tribulation. And if the church and world experience the Tribulation, prophecy takes on a whole new importance to our lives and the lives of our loved ones. It is not simply a science fiction flick that will not affect us whatsoever. It can be frightening but also exciting because when the Perfect comes, the light will triumph over darkness, mortality will put on immortality, and we will live in the presence of our Lord. This book is for those who have ears to hear and desire to be overcomers in the end-time. It is for those who will do all it takes to find prophetic truth and respond accordingly. I hope every reader will one day hear from our Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21a).

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. (Revelation 2:29)

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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To my dear wife, Kimberly, and her unending support and encouragement through this long process.

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And Tim Cranston, a long-time dear friend who gave countless hours in editing this book.

To the many people whom I saw were confused about the end-time, which gave me the drive to complete this project.

**1**

**WHY STUDY PROPHECY?**

About the time of the end, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies … in the midst of much clamor and opposition.

—Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727)

**Being Ready/Prepared**

The Second Coming is a beautiful love story woven throughout the scriptures—a story about a marriage and a bride preparing herself for a wedding. It is a story of Christ, our groom, coming for His bride the church (believers), and destroying evil in the world. It will be the most important event in human history. What was destroyed in the Garden of Eden will be redeemed and made whole again. The Second Coming is what the creation longs for and is the most talked about event in the Bible.

If we get a vision of who Christ is now and His plan and purpose for the future, it will transform our inner being and cause us to love like never before. If we hear what the Spirit says to the churches, we will have a purpose and direction in our lives as we navigate the end-time.

In chapter 4, we will find that the church will go through the Tribulation, a seven-year period that will be the most trying time in human history (Daniel 9:24–27). Jesus told us many times to prepare for this period (e.g., Matthew 24:1–46, 25:13; Luke 12:47–48, 21:36), so we must know what will happen. We must understand the signs and prepare spiritually, emotionally, and physically for the Tribulation and Christ’s return. We are to look for the prophesied events that precede the Tribulation and the Second Coming. This chapter tells us why Jesus told us to understand and prepare for what will soon be upon us. We will discuss what scripture says about how to prepare and live in the time of the end in chapter 14.

Jesus wants our hearts and lives ready for these future events—even to the point of possibly dying for our faith. He does not want our hearts to grow cold or be caught up in the falling away, which will happen to many in the church (Matthew 24:12). Knowing that God has revealed these things to us ahead of time will help reduce our fears and allow us to remain strong. It could be too late if we wait to get serious until the Tribulation. Revelation talks about those who didn’t change their ways during this time (Revelation 9:21). The time for a change in our hearts and actions is now. We as a church body must be overcomers in this period. We should ask ourselves, what is our role in the end-time?

Some people look at end-time prophecy as a kind of sci-fi movie in which they are not directly affected. Many feel that Christ will take them out of this world before these terrible things happen. But what if they are wrong? What if we Christians will experience the coming Tribulation? In that case, prophecy takes on a whole new meaning. We will discuss this more in chapters 4–6.

John in Revelation describes the bride making herself ready. ‘“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready’” (Revelation 19:7).

We must ask ourselves, “What does it mean to be ready, and how are we to accomplish this?”

**Find out how we can be ready for the Tribulation and Christ’s Second Coming in Chapter 14 of the full book version.**

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The Bible refers to people’s hearts melting with fear of events occurring in the Tribulation (Luke 21:26). Don’t think that we won’t have anxiety in the Tribulation. It will be terrifying. However, the Bible teaches that we will be much better off for eternity if we are prepared and do what it says. Fear will grip most people to the point that they won’t be able to function during the Tribulation because they did not act ahead of time, nor were they seeing the signs of it coming. Not that seeing and understanding the signs will prevent all fear, but this understanding can prevent our lives from being governed by this fear.

**We Are Called to Watch**

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch” (Mark 13:37).

In Luke, Christ says: “It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them” (Luke 12:37).

I was amazed when I read this verse. It hit me deeply that Christ will even *serve* us in the life to come if we watch for His return. If we are to watch, what should we watch for before this climactic event? Peter said that the prophets of old carefully searched and “predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow” (1 Peter 1:10–11). The circumstances and timing surrounding Christ’s First Coming and Second Coming have been the “Holy Grail” of biblical-prophecy interpretation since prophets like Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Joel wrote about them. We must carefully search the scriptures to know when this time is approaching.

Jesus stated in Luke 21:36 that we should watch for signs surrounding the Tribulation: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” For us to “watch” and “stand before the Son of Man,” we need to know what signs to look for; this requires carefully studying applicable scripture and inquiring of the Lord. Jesus did not say that some should watch, but all. Unfortunately, most Christians are not watching, primarily because they see it as too difficult to figure out. This book is written in a clear and concise manner so that prophecy that affects us is understandable.

**We Are Called to Know the Signs**

Many Christians use Matthew 24:36, when Jesus said we wouldn’t know the exact hour of His coming, to dismiss any ability to predict when this time is upon us. He then described many signs that will precede His return. The rest of biblical prophecy on the subject gives us clear and direct signs that will allow us to know the time of the approaching Second Coming. To believe that we will be in the dark about those days, we would have to dismiss multitudes of verses that speak to the end-time. With so much written in scripture on the subject, why would we be destined to be in the dark? God told us the signs that we will recognize when they are upon us. We may not know the *exact* day or hour, but scripture teaches us to understand the approximate time when the signs and birth pangs begin to take shape. It should not surprise us like a thief:

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates, we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5:1–4)

It grieved Jesus’s heart when the Jews did not believe He was the Messiah. They did not understand the prophecies in the Old Testament that spoke about a suffering Messiah; instead, they were looking for Christ to deliver them militarily from Roman oppression. Because they didn’t understand these prophecies and didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah, they had Him killed. In addition, the Roman army destroyed their temple and city in AD 70—as was prophesied in the Gospel according to Luke.

Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, “If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:41–44)

If Jesus was this upset over the blindness of the Jews regarding His First Coming—how will He react to those who miss His Second Coming, given the eternal consequences and the fact that so much more is written about it in the Bible?

**We Are Called to Know Scriptures on Prophecy**

Many scriptures describe what will occur in the future (i.e., prophecies). For example, Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy, by J. Barton Payne, lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament—26 percent of the text in the Bible contains these prophecies. And of these predictions, there are eight times more about the Second Coming than the First Coming.2

Jesus gave us prophetic scriptures to help protect us mentally and spiritually during the end-time. Although many Christians will die in the Tribulation—just like those martyred today as they were in the first century church—some will survive to the end. It holds true that people live what they believe. If we heed these scriptures, it will change our lives.

Because God devoted so much time to prophecy, particularly about the timing of the Second Coming, we should try to understand what He said.

Unlike those who missed His First Coming and who did not identify Him as the Messiah, it was important to the disciples that they discern the timing of the Second Coming (Matthew 24:3).

**We Are Called to Share the Gospel of the Kingdom**

The prophetic truths in the Bible are for believers and nonbelievers alike. Scripture tells us to pay attention to these truths and proclaim God’s coming kingdom. Prophecy is a fantastic way to share our faith with those who do not believe. We are told in the Gospels to preach the gospel of the kingdom, which is not just salvation and lordship alone. The kingdom of God includes the prophecies related to Jesus’s return, His reign on earth, His victory over death, and our eternal life with Him. “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a *witness* to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14, emphasis added).

Many of us do not proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. Some of us do not realize that scripture encourages us to share it; others don’t know what it fully entails; still, others are afraid. We are rightly focusing on the salvation of souls and making Him Lord of our lives, but many are not giving thought to end-time events ahead of us. In chapter 13, we will discuss this kingdom in-depth.

**We Are Called to Discern False Teaching and Doctrine**

Many predictions and dates concerning His Second Coming have not proven true. These false predictions put a black mark on Christians and diminish our credibility with the world. Since all these predictions have been wrong, we can look foolish to the world if we don’t understand prophetic scripture properly.

In knowing the truth of prophecy revealed in the Bible, we will not be swayed by every doomsday scenario that is out there. An example of this was the end of the Mayan calendar on December 21, 2012. Many thought the end of this age would occur and a utopian period would begin; obviously, they were wrong. However, the Bible teaches that the Tribulation and Second Coming will happen before the kingdom of God (a time of peace) commences. This understanding precludes any such prediction that Christ could come at any moment.

These false assumptions about prophecy have affected the world and the church politically and spiritually. Below are examples of incorrect assumptions about prophecy that have politically affected the world and the church’s belief system.

During his political tenure, Ronald Reagan, believed Russia would be an evil empire in biblical end-time. He erroneously aligned the Communist nation with Gog of Magog, a nation’s ruler referred to in Ezekiel 38. Author Paul Boyer writes of Reagan’s misconception:

The popularity of this theory during the Cold War [associating Russia with the biblical nation of Magog] can be seen in that it was openly advocated in 1971 by the then Governor of California, Ronald Reagan. During a dinner address to state legislators Reagan said “Ezekiel tells us that Gog [sic], the nation that will lead all of the other powers of darkness against Israel, will come out of the north. Biblical scholars have been saying for generations that Gog must be Russia. What other powerful nation is to the north of Israel? None. But it didn’t seem to make sense before the Russian Revolution, when Russia was a Christian country. Now it does, now that Russia has become communistic and atheistic, now that Russia has set itself against God. Now it fits the description of Gog perfectly.”3

Author Joel Rosenberg documents how Reagan talked many times about Gog/Magog in relation to Russia, even with his White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker and National Security Advisor Colin Powell.4

Reagan’s thinking shows how false prophecy beliefs can dramatically affect our world.

At the time of this writing, we are seeing pastors such as Greg Laurie, who believes Magog is Russia, saying that the Russia-Ukraine conflict is a sign of Jesus’s return. The title of a March 6, 2022 Daily Star article reads: “Radical Christians reckon Ukraine war is ‘sign of Jesus’s return’ and the ‘end of times.’” This article refers to Laurie’s views.5 Similarly, the Washington Post asserts that evangelist Pat Robertson believes that God is causing Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine because of his belief in Magog being Russia.6

We will discuss in chapter 8 why Magog cannot be Russia.

Author and radio host Harold Camping is another example of someone within the church misleading thousands of Christians into believing that Christ’s return would occur on May 21, 2012. Many of them sold all they had and traveled the country, proclaiming this falsehood. These people severely disrupted their lives and those around them in believing such heresy because they did not understand God’s prophetic truths.

Some Christians believe various American presidents as being the Antichrist (the beast). Others believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the Antichrist system and that a future pope will be the Antichrist. These beliefs shed a negative light on the USA and Catholicism and are not biblical. If we have appropriate prophetic theology, we will know Satan’s battle plan. We are to identify who the Antichrist is and what it means to follow him by taking the “mark of the beast.” What is the mark of the beast? We are to know what it is so we can resist it. Identifying who the Antichrist will be and where he will arise is critical. It is easy for us to travel down rabbit trails in thinking that the Antichrist will come from Europe, Russia, or someplace else. Or that somehow someone will insert a microchip into us—the mark of the beast—damning our souls. We will discuss these false views in chapter 10.

In sum, many Christians will fall away because they are confused about the Tribulation and Second Coming (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Their falling away may be in part linked to looking for the wrong signs or holding to the erroneous belief of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture. When the Rapture does not precede the Tribulation, this falling away is a likely result. If we are on the cusp of the Tribulation, we owe it to ourselves, friends, and families, to study, purify our hearts, and live the life of love that Jesus calls us to. If we hold erroneous beliefs about the end-time, are people going to trust us when the time actually comes when they will need our guidance? Will they heed the warning from us on who the Antichrist is, what the mark of the beast is? Their salvation may depend on our prophetic witness.

**Pastors Are Called to Teach Sound End-Time Doctrine**

Pastors and teachers must take Jesus’s words seriously in Matthew:

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, “My master is staying away a long time,” and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 24:45–51)

The above is about teachers giving “food” during the end-time. The food here is the Word of God. In teaching end-time doctrine, pastors should be careful to give quality “food” to their flocks. He will put those leaders “in charge of all his possessions.”

**Concluding Remarks**

Why study prophecy? Because we can know much about the future beforehand. We owe it to ourselves and to our friends and families to be aware of this. We can see into the future, remain strong, be in faith, have pure hearts, and, most importantly, walk in the love of Christ; in so doing, we can give comfort to others.

Many scriptures are still veiled to us, but when the time comes when God is ready to open our eyes, we must be prepared to receive His revelation. Some of these scriptures will remain a mystery until more understanding is given. But there is much to know now in prophetic scripture, and we will be exploring them in succeeding chapters.

If we accomplish all these things (e.g., understand prophecy, become wise, share the gospel, discern false teaching, and act accordingly), we will be overcomers, and there will be rewards for us as the book of Revelation addresses. And there are perils for those who don’t overcome. We will delve into these issues in chapters 13 and 14. As our example, Jesus knew the joy set before Him and overcame the cross (Hebrews 12:2). We need to understand what is before us to endure suffering and be victorious. There are vast differences between being wise by understanding the times versus preceding blindly in the dark.

In the next chapter, we will talk about God’s amazing book, the Bible, and how it is trustworthy in predicting the future.

There are reasons why so much of the Bible is devoted to prophecy. Let’s explore these prophetic scriptures as we move through this book.

Jesus said: “See, I have told you beforehand” (Matthew 24:25).

**2**

**THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY SOURCE OF PROPHETIC TRUTH**

**Introduction**

In the last chapter, we saw how important it is to watch for the signs leading up to the Tribulation and Christ’s return, and prepare for them. Now we will see that these signs in the Bible can be trusted to occur in the future.

Prophetic truths in the Bible, and what the early church taught, are the foundation of this book. Since this is the case, we need first to establish the validity of the Bible and the fact that our translations today are consistent with early manuscripts. This chapter will scrutinize the Bible as to its accuracy in foretelling previous events that have come to pass as predicted. Past events predict future behavior, and if the Bible’s predictions have come true in the past, particularly the foretelling of Christ’s First Coming, we can be sure that what it foretells about His Second Coming will come to pass as well.

This chapter will also look at the validity of Islam’s books, the Quran and Hadith, and why we cannot trust them as God’s Word. Only the Bible holds up to careful examination as being trustworthy. This chapter will also explore fulfilled prophecies in the Bible, archeological evidence, and scientific collaboration. We will answer certain questions such as: Are there missing books in the Bible, and are our translations accurate? What is the biblical definition of a true prophet?

With so many voices in the prophecy world about what is before us, we can liken them to lousy reception on a radio station. You can hear a bit, but most are garbled, unintelligible, and untrue. It is hard to get anything reliable out of them. What if we found the one station that made sense to us? What if the producer of that show was always right not only about things of this life but the life to come? Would you pay close attention to that station? This chapter shows that the Bible is that station, the only one we can trust. The Bible is truth, and we can trust that the prophecies it contains will come to pass.

The Bible is the most influential book in history. The *Guinness Book of World Records* states: “Although it is impossible to obtain exact figures, there is little doubt that the Bible is the world’s best-selling and most widely distributed book. A Bible Society survey concluded that the printing of around 2.5 billion copies of the Bible occurred between 1815 and 1975. Still, more recent estimates put the number at more than 5 billion.”8

**Fulfilled Prophecies Validate the Bible**

Let’s look at some of the prophecies written in the scriptures and see how accurate they have been.

The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books written by forty authors separated by hundreds of miles and written over fifteen hundred years. It is different from any other book because it has a perfect track record with fulfilled prophecy. And as we will see, we can be sure that what it predicts will come to pass.

Apostle Peter said: “We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

Author Charlie Campbell, director of the Always Be Ready Apologetics Ministry, has studied the integrity of the Bible compared to other religious books for twenty-five years and has come to the following conclusion: “There are no fulfilled prophecies in the Hindu Vedas, the Quran, the Book of Mormon, or any other sacred religious writings. Not one.”9

We will begin by discussing the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament. Most of the books of the Old Testament have prophecies about Christ. We will show direct predictions that He has fulfilled. We must briefly skim this subject because of the vast amount of information. As we saw in the previous chapter, over one-quarter of the Bible is prophecy, and much of it centers around the Messiah. Jesus said: “You study the scriptures diligently because you think that in them, you have eternal life. These are the very scriptures that testify about me” (John 5:39a).

Scholar H. P. Liddon of Oxford University noted 332 specific biblical prophecies about the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled.10

Peter Stoner, former chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College, determined that the odds of someone fulfilling just eight of these 332 prophecies is 1 in 100 quadrillion (That’s a one followed by fifteen zeros: 1,000,000,000,000,000.)11

The disciples knew what the prophecies said in the Old Testament about the Messiah. We see this in the Gospel according to John: “Philip found Nathanael and told him, ‘We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’” (John 1:45).

The writing of predictions in the Old Testament occurred hundreds of years before Jesus fulfilled them. These are just a few: He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14); He would perform miracles (Isaiah 35:5–6); He would enter Jerusalem triumphantly on a donkey’s colt (Zechariah 9:9); He would be rejected by the Jews (Isaiah 53:1–3); A friend would betray Him for thirty pieces of silver (Psalm 41:9, Zechariah 11:12–13); He would die for our sins and be rejected (Isaiah 53); He would be crucified (foretold even before there was crucifixion, Psalm 22:16–18); none of His bones would be broken (Numbers 9:12), and He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10).

**Archeological Evidence of the Bible’s Truthfulness**

To further establish that the Bible is trustworthy with the prophecies it contains, let’s look at the archeological and scientific evidence that supports its legitimacy. The Bible has never been archeologically disproven. Numerous skeptics have claimed that biblical cities or people never existed. Subsequently, archeological digs have discovered evidence that eventually validated the biblical history and thereby disproved the skeptics. A contemporary example of this is the belief that King David never existed. Until 1993 there was no evidence of his existence.14 But in 1993, archaeologist Avraham Biran discovered a stone with the inscription “House of David” in northern Israel (the Tel Dan Stele, dated 900 BC).15

**Are Our Translations Accurate?**

Skeptics question the accuracy of Bible translations. To trust the Bible in predicting prophecy, we must trust that our translations are congruent with early manuscripts. Are translations starting with the King James Version accurate representations of the original texts? Or have inaccuracies and perversions crept in over the millennia? Answering these questions goes a long way in establishing the Bible as either accurate and thereby trustworthy in what it says about prophecy or corrupted and thereby invalid.

**Find out more about the Bible’s archeological and scientific evidence, and why our translations are accurate in the full book version.**

<https://www.westbowpress.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/840755-when-the-perfect-comes>

**Islam’s False Prophecies**

Some of you may be Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon, or other religions. God loves you. Apostle John assures us: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). When this verse talks about the “world,” that means everyone, including you! God is ever so passionate for you. He wants you to know the truth and the liberation it brings. “To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John 8:31–32).

Since we will be addressing Islam to a great degree in this book, let’s compare the Bible’s prophetic Word to prophecies in Islam’s books that they deem holy.

Muslims say that they believe in the Bible but that Christians and Jews have corrupted it. They change many narratives because of this supposed corruption, including their prophecies about the end-time.33

Islam claims the Quran contains statements made by Allah (their god), which were given to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. Muhammad was illiterate, so scribes wrote down what he said over twenty-three years.

Muslims have two “holy books,” the Quran and the Hadith. The Quran was written beginning in AD 609, when Muhammad was forty, and concluding in 632, the year of his death. Hadith literature, Muhammad’s acts, and sayings were compiled between the eighth and ninth centuries, at least one hundred years after his death. The Hadith contains most of Islam’s end-time prophecies. By the ninth century, the number of Hadiths grew to approximately sixty thousand, many of which contradict each other in material ways. Islamic scholars had to pick and choose which ones they deemed accurate.34

Writers of the Hadith borrowed writings from extra-biblical texts called pseudoapocraphia. The Gospel of Judas and the Gospel of Thomas were two gnostic documents written more than a century after the New Testament and were falsely attributed to Judas and Thomas as authors. These non-canonized books circulated in early Christianity. Nevertheless, Islamic writers used these spurious books in their eschatology and the Bible, perverting the latter’s teaching.35

In addition, the Hadith states that humans were first created up to ninety feet tall and then began to decrease in height with time. This claim has been disproven by science. Humans have grown in height over the years. The Hadith also says that the human embryo spends forty days as a drop of sperm, forty days as a clot, and forty days as a piece of flesh (Sahih Bukhari 4:55–543). In truth, by day fifty-six, it has become a completely functioning fetus with all its organs in place.

**Concluding Remarks**

The Bible is set apart from any other book due to its fulfilled prophecies, the many authors in agreement with each other over hundreds of years, its scientific soundness, archeological evidence, the thousands of copies that match each other, early church writings, and the writings outside the Bible that verify its accuracy.

We have shown that the Bible is the only true Word of God. It is the only accurate source for questions that pertain to the future. It should be the measuring stick for all other books and proclamations of people. We should study and know what the Bible says regarding prophecy before accepting non-biblical predictions. While we would never deny the gift of prophecy, as described in 1 Corinthians 12, anything produced by this gift should always align with what the Bible says. It should never contradict the Bible. The Bible also says in 1 Corinthians 14:32 that “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.” If people are not pointing to Christ in their foretelling, we should be wary. Before considering what people are saying about the future, it is first prudent to know the Bible, since it is our primary reference point.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 2:20–21).

The next chapter will delve into finding prophetic truth in the Bible, so hold tight and keep an open mind.

**3**

**HOW TO FIND PROPHETIC TRUTH**

**Introduction**

In the previous chapter, we found that the Bible is the only source of prophetic truth. This chapter will discover that we need wisdom and the right approach to understand this truth. Only God can know the future. We must seek God with the right heart and be open to His truth to understand prophecy. God is the author of humility and truth, while Satan is the author of pride and deception. Knowing Satan’s battle plan of deception will help us avoid going down the wrong path in prophetic understanding. We should pay attention to biblical prophets and what the early church taught as handed down from the apostles. Also, using proper methods of studying prophecy is essential. The Holy Spirit must be our guide in knowing what lies ahead of us.

**We Must Understand That Wisdom and Truth Come from God**

As far as prophecy, some people find truth by relying on the morning paper, their emotions, human reasoning, and prophetic gurus. We must look to prophetic truth that comes from above.

To find the truth about the future, we must first realize that all wisdom comes from God, is given by Him, and that this wisdom written in the Bible, as the previous chapter described, is the only trustworthy source. “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6).

The Word of God in scripture is where we will find truth, and every other prophecy and prediction outside the Bible should be subject to truth found in scripture (2 Timothy 3:16). Comparing sources to the Bible pertains to all religious books and extra-biblical prophets.

Only God knows the end from the beginning; no human being knows. If so-called prophets do not give glory to God and point to themselves as having prophetic powers, they are misguided charlatans. Only God is the source of truth (including prophecy), and credit must be given to Him whose “purpose will stand”: “I [God] make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please’” (Isaiah 46:10).

Jesus told us that His followers would walk in spirit and truth. We walk in the Spirit when we yield our hearts to His. And we walk in truth when we follow Him, and His words as written in the Bible (John 4:24).

Like the song expresses, many are “looking for love in all the wrong places,” and many are looking for prophetic truth in all the wrong places. If we look in the wrong place, we will always end in error.

It is incredible to see so many people following “prophecies” and beliefs given by individuals inside and outside the church. Yet they have not studied, nor have they considered prophecies in the Bible. We should gauge these so-called prophets through the lens of truth found in scripture, for He has “made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Corinthians 1:20).

**We Must Know That Man Does Not Have the Answers**

We must turn our eyes away from man and toward God to know the future. “And fools multiply words. No one knows what is coming—who can tell someone else what will happen after them” (Ecclesiastes 10:14).

We can be prideful: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6b). Man does not bear truth, only God does, and we as humankind can draw attention to ourselves and act like we are the conveyor of truth and not give the glory to God.

We can also be deceitful: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it” (Jeremiah 17:9–10)?

We can be deceived. We are warned not to be deceived by anyone in the end-time (Matthew 24:4). Satan is the author of deception and has confused even the sincerest of seekers. Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and can easily deceive us if we are not submitting to God and resisting the devil (James 4:7). He can even deceive us by misrepresenting scripture as he tried to do with Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:3). If we are not careful, being deceived will end in not acknowledging our Lord (Jeremiah 9:6). Israel’s deceptive watchmen were blind (Isaiah 56:10–11), and today there exist blind shepherds in the church who are deceiving their flocks. Do not take the bait of prophecy teachers who have their own fanciful interpretations that do not line up with God’s Word (1 John 2:27, John 16:13, 2 Peter 1:20). Many of them do not have pure motives. “For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people” (Romans 16:18). God warned the Israelites in the Old Testament about those so-called prophets who “prophesy out of their own imagination” (Ezekiel 13:2).

In 2 Timothy 3:3–7, Paul speaks of people in the last days always learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. They love only themselves and are arrogant and proud. It takes a good dose of humility to reach the understanding of truth. We must avoid pointing to ourselves as having superior knowledge of any subject, especially the end-time. It is clear from the heart of God that apart from Him, there is no wisdom, understanding, or truth originating in man. We should be skeptical about any teaching that is not in the Bible. All else is either conjecture, guesswork, pride, or deceit. Just because someone sounds convincing, it doesn’t necessarily mean he or she has truth.

**We Must Know Satan’s Battle Plan**

Our enemy is Satan. We need to know his battle plan. The scriptures instruct us to be involved in the spiritual battle and do warfare prayer against principalities and powers in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 6:12).

Satan’s battle plan includes luring us to (1) follow deceiving spirits and their doctrine, (2) hold onto long-held false beliefs, (3) benefit from peddling false beliefs, (4) refuse to change those beliefs, (5) follow beliefs that are more comfortable or less painful, and (6) become prideful.

First, Matthew tells us that deception will be rampant in the end-time (Matthew 24:4, 11). Death (spiritual, mental, or physical) follows when heeding false teaching (Proverbs 14:12). Many will commit apostasy and unknowingly follow false teachers and demons, being deceived by Satan. “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:4a).

Second, are we willing to give up our long-held beliefs that may have taken much thought, effort, and time? We may have believed wrong doctrine in the past, so now we need to lead others out of it. Apostle Paul counted all that he had known falsely before his revelation of Christ as “rubbish” (Philippians 3:8).

Third, some preachers teach falsely. They even earn their livings perpetrating these beliefs. In the book of James, it says that teachers will be judged more harshly than others (James 3:1). False teachers teach false doctrine. However, some of these are sincerely misled.

Paul said that if he sought the praises of man, he would cease to be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

Fourth, change is always hard, especially regarding our deeply held beliefs. Yet an unknown author once said, “Discovering that what you have always believed is wrong is one of the most liberating and exciting things you can experience. It is humbling. It is exhilarating. It sets you on a lifetime quest for knowledge and understanding.” One of the most significant confessions we can make are three words: “I was wrong.” Let’s approach the scriptures with a clean slate, an open mind for change, and see what God has in store for us.

Fifth, we may choose to believe something because it is less painful or more appealing. But following the easy path doesn’t always lead to truth. As the French mathematician Blaise Pascal stated in his work *The Art of Persuasion*, “People almost invariably arrive at their beliefs not on the basis of proof but on the basis of what they find attractive.” When we look for the next “high” from the hype surrounding much of today’s false prophecy, it can lead us down a wrong path. We should always be more concerned with living God’s truth than following something that simply feels good. We might go through persecution and death, but we gain everything. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (Psalm 119:71).

Finally, biblical knowledge can puff us up in pride. “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not” (1 Corinthians 4:7)? We need to be careful that when we receive truth from God, we don’t boast in our understanding; instead, we boast in Jesus alone.

We should ask ourselves, are we really trying to find truth, or are we merely defending what we already believe? Are we more concerned with being right than seeking to find truth and avoiding swallowing our pride? Are we trying to prove the point we have held for so many years? Have we spent so much time studying a particular viewpoint that we feel it is too late to change? Am I so comfortable and complacent with this viewpoint that I don’t want to change?

We must love truth more than our reputation, comfort, or pride in being right. Do we want to hear the praises of man or the affirmation of God: “Well done thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21)?

**Find out more about how the prophet Daniel is an example of how to find prophetic truth and how to interpret biblical prophecy in the full version of the book.**

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**4**

**THE CHURCH WILL GO THROUGH THE TRIBULATION**

**Introduction**

In the previous chapter, we learned how to find prophetic truth in the Bible. Let’s now use proper exegesis to assess whether the post-Tribulation view (that at the end of the Tribulation, Jesus will rapture His followers and descend to earth) is correct. If this is the case, Christians will go through the entire Tribulation, which has enormous ramifications.

We will discuss that the early church believed Christians would go through the Tribulation, and apostles John, Luke, Paul, and Jesus all taught a post-Tribulation Rapture.

**What Is the Rapture?**

The term “rapture” was used in the Bible to describe miraculous events that occurred during the apostolic period, and which will occur during the end-time. It means “to seize, carry off by force, to snatch out or away” (*Strong’s Concordance*). It can also mean to be “taken away.” For example, “rapture” (Greek h*arpazō*) was used in Acts 8:39 when Phillip was taken away after baptizing an Ethiopian eunuch: “When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.”

This chapter makes the case that the rapture of the church will occur at the end of the Tribulation immediately before Jesus comes down to earth at His Second Coming: “After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up [raptured] together with them in the clouds” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

**Different Views of What Happens at the Second Coming**

The Second Coming will include the resurrection of Christians who have died, the rapture of living believers, and the gathering of both groups with Jesus in the clouds. It is followed immediately by Christ descending with believers to earth and then engaging in war with Middle Eastern Muslim nations (discussed in chapter 12). When we return with Christ, we will fight the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16). This long day will reach its climax with Christ setting up the kingdom of God, in which He will rule over the whole earth from Jerusalem during the final restoration of all things—the millennium (a thousand-year period before the final judgment, discussed in chapter 13).

According to scripture, the Second Coming of Christ will be the culmination of human events in history. The questions raised by believers over the centuries have always been “What and When?” The answers to these questions divide Christians into various views of eschatology (the study of “last things”). Some incorrectly believe He will first come and take believers out of this world and into heaven before the Tribulation (pre-Tribulation Rapture). Some think the Tribulation and Second Coming have already occurred (preterists). Others believe He will take them out during the Tribulation (mid-Tribulation, and pre-Wrath Rapture). Martin Luther and John Calvin held the view of Historicism, which holds that much of prophecy in Revelation has occurred throughout history and continues to occur. The correct view is that He will rapture the church in the future after the Tribulation (post-Tribulation Rapture). This interpretation is the subject of this chapter. All these groups believe Jesus returns to earth after the Tribulation at the Second Coming. We will talk about the correct view (post-Tribulation) in this chapter, and the false opinions in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Compared to the rest of human history, the Tribulation will be our most trying time, primarily for the Middle East and throughout the world. It will include the disasters described in the book of Revelation when catastrophic pandemonium will break out on earth. The remainder of this chapter demonstrates conclusively that the early church and scripture teach a post-Tribulation Rapture.

**The Early Church’s View of the Timing of the Rapture**

The post-Tribulation Rapture position was the consensus of the church up until the 1800s. Other views of the Rapture timing did not appear in end-time eschatology until 1830. The early church fathers included apostles John and Paul. They wrote much of the prophecy in the New Testament. They passed down oral teaching about prophecy to subsequent church fathers.

These early church fathers taught a post-Tribulation Rapture and a subsequent thousand-year earthly reign of Christ (millennium). Polycarp, a bishop of Smyrna and a direct disciple of apostle John, held to a post-Tribulation view. One of his disciples was Irenaeus, a second-century Roman theologian and bishop of Lyons (AD 120–202). Irenaeus also grew up in Smyrna. John mentioned the Smyrna church in Revelation.

Irenaeus stated: “And they [the ten kings] shall lay Babylon to waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the beast, *and put the church to flight* (emphasis added). After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.”

The “beast” here is in reference to the Antichrist described in Revelation 13:1. So we see here that Ireneaus held the view that the church would be present during the Tribulation when the Antichrist persecutes the church on earth. If John had held the pre-Tribulation view, he would have made it plain to Polycarp, who would have relayed it to Irenaeus.

Irenaeus also stated:

We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him [the apostle John] who beheld the apocalyptic vision …38 For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist . . . and with respect to those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked One.39

Irenaeus believed that the church would suffer the Tribulation. The resurrection of dead believers and rapture of those living, who are “found in the flesh” waiting for Christ’s Second Coming, will occur after the Antichrist and Tribulation.

Justin Martyr (AD 110–165), another early church theologian, stated:

[Christ] is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth *against us the Christians* (emphasis added).40

The man of apostasy is the Antichrist who does “unlawful deeds against Christians.” It was clear that Justin was neither a pre-Tribulationalist nor a preterist and believed that the Antichrist, “the man of apostasy,” would persecute the church in the Tribulation.

**Read about other early church writers that believed in a post-Trib Rapture in the full version of the book.**

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So, it is clear that the early church fathers taught a post-Tribulation Rapture in which Christians will experience the Tribulation. Those holding other views have the burden of proof in overriding long-held theology from the apostles through the early church.

Some feel that much of the early church’s doctrine cannot be trusted. There was false teaching in the church during Paul’s day, which needed to be dealt with. Ultimately, we must rely on what canonized scripture says. However, it is strange that there is no mention of a pre-Trib Rapture in the writings of the church until the nineteenth century.47 Surely, with the timing of the Rapture being one of the most important end-time questions, if pre-Trib Rapture were true, there would exist some mention of it in early church writings. John would have made it clear to Polycarp and others, and there would have at least been a debate about it as there were with many other theological issues.

**Scriptural Proof of a Post-Tribulation Rapture**

This section will lay the foundation for a post-Tribulation Rapture based on the teachings of Luke, Paul, and Jesus. We will discuss how Luke and Paul describe the events surrounding a post-Tribulation Rapture and how they affirm Jesus’s teaching. Considering their direct teaching on the subject, we will find that the post-Tribulation view is correct.

**Luke, Paul, and Jesus Affirm a Post-Tribulation Rapture**

Luke describes the timing of the Rapture: “For He must remain *in heaven* until the time for the final restoration of all things [millennium], as God promised long ago through his holy prophets” (Acts 3:21 NLT, emphasis added).

Translations of the Bible have different wording on this scripture, but all relay the same theme. Jesus will be received in heaven and remain there until the “restoration of all things.” Here are some versions of the first part of the verse: “Heaven must receive him” (NIV); “Whom the heaven must receive” (KJV); “Whom heaven must receive” (ESV); “But Jesus must stay in heaven” (CEV); “Heaven must take Him” (BSB); “Whom heaven must keep” (AMP); “He must remain in heaven” (GNT)l “Whom heaven must retain” (ANT); “But must reside in heaven” (MNT).

The idea is the same: Jesus stays in heaven and does not leave for the Rapture until after the Tribulation, at the Second Coming. Heaven must receive and retain Him and not give Him up until the time of restoration. The term “restoration,” according to *Strong’s Concordance* is in reference to “a true theocracy.” Jesus will set up His true theocracy when He returns after the Tribulation. This theocracy will begin the kingdom of God—millennium—the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. We will discuss in detail the kingdom of God in chapter 13. The Tribulation is a time of tearing down, and the millennium is a time of restoration.

Paul’s theology was identical to Luke’s, and they both drew on Jesus’s teachings, which we will discuss later. Luke and Paul place the Rapture immediately after the Tribulation at the Second Coming when Jesus descends from heaven. Jesus never spoke of the Rapture happening before that time. For example, Paul writes to the Thessalonians:

For this we say to you *by the word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain until the *coming* of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from *heaven* with a shout, with the voice of an *archangel*, and with the *trumpet* of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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 Thessalonians 4:15–17 NASB, emphasis added)

The Greek word for heaven in Acts 3:21 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 is the same, *ouranos*, which, according to *Strong’s Concordance*, means “the aerial heavens or sky, the region where the clouds and the tempests gather where thunder and lightning are produced.” Luke and Paul were talking about the same heaven, and Christ will remain in heaven until the Rapture and the time of restoration of all things—the millennium. He will not rapture the church before or during the Tribulation because this period is not restoration but destruction. So, we conclude that Acts 3:21 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16 are speaking of the same event, the Second Coming, which includes the Rapture.

Luke and Paul based their end-time theology on the teachings of Jesus. In Matthew 24, Jesus is preaching about His Second Coming, and this teaching is the “word of the Lord” that Paul was referring to. Both Paul in the above Thessalonians passage and Jesus in Matthew 24 refer to Christ coming in the clouds of heaven (ouranos) with *angels* and a loud *trumpet* and a *gathering* (*caught up*) of Christians:

“Immediately after the distress of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man *coming* on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his *angels* with a loud *trumpet* call, and they will *gather* his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” (Matthew 24:29–31, emphasis added)

Again, it is immediately after the Tribulation (“the distress of those days”) that Jesus will descend from heaven. He will then gather His elect—the church. To “gather” the elect refers to the rapture of the living and resurrection of the dead believers. The word for “elect” is *eklektos* in Greek and is used twenty-three times in the New Testament, according to *Strong’s Concordance*, and refers to Christians. He gathers the elect from the heavens and the four winds, which means the earth (Revelation 7:1).

We also see the Greek word *parousia* in the above verses from Paul and Jesus, which is translated as “coming.” These all are in reference to His return, which includes the Rapture after the Tribulation.

Additionally, the verses below from 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Thessalonians 2 also speak of His coming/parousia. These verses also show that those in Christ are risen and raptured at that time after the Tribulation:

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His *coming*. (1 Corinthians 15:20–23 KJV, emphasis added)

Concerning the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being *gathered* to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the Day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that Day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1–4, emphasis added)

Our gathering to meet Him, the Rapture and the resurrection of dead believers, and His coming/*parousia* do not occur until the falling away, apostasy, and the man of sin (the Antichrist) is revealed. The revealing of the Antichrist happens during the Tribulation, as we will see in chapters 10 and 11. Paul was preparing them to remain strong in the coming persecutions to know that Christ’s coming will be after the Tribulation and coming of the Antichrist. He didn’t want us to be deceived by false teaching.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:1, and Matthew 24:31, the word for gather and gathering is the same in Greek, *episynagoge*. These words refer to the gathering of all Christians as part of the Rapture “immediately after the distress of those days.” They are describing the same event.

The Day of the Lord in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, as we will see in chapter 12, is the Second Coming, which includes the Rapture. The Day of the Lord will come to unbelievers as “a thief in the night” (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

**Hebrews Affirms a Post-Tribulation Rapture**

Until this time (the Day of the Lord), Hebrews tells us that Jesus is waiting at the right hand of God since His ascension. On the Day of the Lord, His enemies will become His footstool: “But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time He waits for his enemies to be made his footstool” (Hebrews 10:12–13).

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the word *footstool* refers to a reduction “under one’s power.” Christ’s enemies become His footstool at the end of the Tribulation when Satan, the Antichrist, and their followers are reduced under Christ’s power.

**Find out more scriptural reasons for a post-Tribulation Rapture in the full version.**

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**Concluding Remarks**

At the Rapture, verses from apostle Paul that we have seen in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and 2 Corinthians are based on the Word of the Lord found in Matthew 24. These scriptures place the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation, when He descends from heaven at the beginning of the millennium (Acts 3:21), and His enemies become His footstool (Hebrews 10:12–13).

So, it is clear that from the doctrine of the early church and scripture, the church will go through the entire Tribulation. A Rapture before or during the Tribulation is untenable.

We have seen the DNA evidence (clear and direct scriptural teaching) for a post-Tribulation Rapture. The next chapter will look at the flawed, convoluted, and circumstantial evidence of the pre-Tribulation Rapture theory. The early church did not teach this theory, and it is unbiblical.

**5**

**LEAVING LEFT BEHIND**

**Introduction**

Those who incorrectly believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture misunderstand prophecy and typically believe that preparing for destruction is not nearly as crucial for those Christians who are alive before the Tribulation. If pre-Tribulation theology is accurate, we will be raptured and gone while the unbelievers will suffer through the Tribulation.

We learned in the previous chapter that scripture supports a post-Tribulation Rapture and the early church fathers confirm what scripture says.

A 2016 Lifeway research study interviewed one thousand American Protestant pastors and found that 36 percent believe in a pre-Tribulation Rapture while 18 percent believe in a post-Tribulation Rapture. Twenty-five percent do not believe in a Rapture at all; 4 percent believe in a mid-Tribulation Rapture; 4 percent believe in a pre-Wrath Rapture; 1 percent believe in full preterism (the belief that the Rapture has already occurred), and 8 percent believe in none of these.49 Partial preterism, the belief that most prophecy except the Second Coming has already happened, was not polled.

The *Left Behind* series has used fantasy to shape the beliefs of millions of people concerning the timing of the Rapture. Selling fifty million copies, the authors, Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, hold to the pre-Tribulation viewpoint, which sees the Rapture occurring before the Tribulation; hence the church will not experience this terrible period and therefore will not have to prepare for it. The *Left Behind* arguments built on the most popular nonfiction book of the 1970s by Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, created the modern pre-Tribulation Rapture craze.

Tim LaHaye founded the Pre-Trib Research Study Center, which promotes the pre-Tribulation doctrine.50

Several recent theologians and evangelists also became enamored with pre-Trib theology. Dr. Daniel L. Akin, former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, states: “[T]here is no way to really measure the tremendous influence of men like Billy Graham, John MacArthur, Warren Wiersbe, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, W.A. Criswell, Adrian Rogers, Jerry Vines and Paige Patterson, all of whom believe in a pre-tribulation … eschatology.”51

Confusion about a pre-Tribulation Rapture can lead people to wonder, “Could this be the day Christ will rapture us?” Many fantasize about flying off to the sky untouched by the horrors of the Tribulation. We can be easily led astray into believing false predictions of the Rapture, instead of preparing our hearts for difficult times.

**Origin of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture**

The prophet Daniel described the Tribulation as “a time of distress such as has never occurred since there was a nation” (Daniel 12:1). Jeremiah called it “the time of Jacob’s [Israel’s] trouble” (Jeremiah 30:5–7). And Jesus said, “if those days had not been cut short, no one would survive” (Matthew 24:22). These descriptions of the Tribulation make the pre-Trib position very desirable. Because many respected Christian teachers hold this view, a large percentage of Christians, especially in the West, believe it.

There are no clear, direct scriptures to support a pre-Tribulation Rapture. As we saw in the last chapter, the view of the early church throughout history has been of a post-Tribulation Rapture. The pre-Trib position is a novel idea and was never spelled out until 1830. Disciples of apostle John, including Polycarp and the early church, were post-Tribulationists, so it is incumbent on the pre-Trib teachers to decisively prove that this long-held doctrine is false.

John Nelson Darby, one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren denomination in the early nineteenth century, is commonly credited by pre-Tribulationists as the one who started the theory. Darby was successful in bringing pre-Tribulationalism to the Americas through Cyrus Scofield.52 Scofield authored the Scofield Reference Bible, making the pre-Tribulation theory an important part of his work.53

Scofield’s followers have had an enormous influence on evangelicals, including the founding of several seminaries (e.g., Dallas Theological Seminary), from which pre-Tribulation theology has spread to additional seminaries.54

In some of these seminaries, professors who hold the post-Trib view are ostracized or even asked to leave. According to David Roach, a journalist for the *Southern Baptist TEXAN*, stated that as of 2009, Cedarville College, Columbia International University, Dallas Theological Seminary, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, and the Master’s Seminary required all faculty to hold to the pre-Tribulation doctrine.55

**Debunking the Pre-Tribulation View**

Unlike post-Trib theology, there are no clear and direct scriptures that explicitly teach a pre-Tribulation Rapture. We will attempt to dissect the tangled reasons why so many believe and have faith in this false teaching, as well as the assumptions that lead pre-Trib theologians to this view. Also, we will discuss alternative explanations to their theories. As we will see below, pre-Tribulation theologians have misinterpreted many scriptures and have tried to fit them into this relatively new and unorthodox teaching.

The previous chapter showed that scripture explicitly supports a post-Trib Rapture, and the early church fathers unanimously held to the post-Trib doctrine. I don’t know about you, but I would stake my case on what scripture teaches and on what was affirmed by early church fathers over the beliefs of John Darby and those that follow him today.

**We cover the below fifteen significant points that the pre-Trib doctrine holds and why they are in error in the full version of the book.**

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Christ could come at any moment (imminence).

God has been dealing with only the church since Pentecost and will deal only with Israel in the Tribulation (dispensationalism).

The Rapture is sudden and a mystery.

Christians are not appointed to wrath.

John being caught up to heaven symbolizes the Rapture.

The restrainer is the Holy Spirit taken out at the Rapture.

Jesus is preparing a place for us to live during the Tribulation.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb occurs after the Rapture.

The Rapture and Second Coming are different events.

The twenty-four elders of Revelation symbolize the church.

Events in the Old Testament point to a pre-Trib Rapture.

The last trumpet is at the Feast Of Trumpets.

Christ’s return is not our “blessed hope” if the Rapture is post-Trib.

All remaining Christians are martyred in the Tribulation, and none are left to be raptured.

The early church wrote about a pre-Tribulation Rapture.

**Concluding Remarks**

The pre-Trib position is based on assumptions and misinterpretations rather than clear and direct scripture. It is speculative and convoluted and requires many fanciful interpretations. This issue may be the most widely held false doctrine relating to prophecy penetrating the church. Satan wants us to be ill-prepared for what is coming. He does not want us to know his battle plan so he can catch us off guard. We need to hold fast to Acts 3:21 (NLT): “For He must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through his holy prophets.” And Hebrews 10:12–13: ”But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.” These are direct and clear verses that place the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation. We should test our assumptions based on scripture. It states plainly when the Rapture will happen, and that will occur when Jesus’s enemies are at His feet, at the time of restoration (the millennium), after the Tribulation. These direct scriptures also preclude a mid-Tribulation or pre-Wrath Rapture (see chapter 6).

We don’t want to steer people, and our families, into falsely believing in a pre-Trib Rapture. The ramifications of this belief may leave us unprepared and are therefore perilous.

If Christ’s Second Coming and Rapture occur after the Tribulation, what does this mean to us, and how do we prepare? We will discuss these topics in chapter 14.

In the next chapter, we will talk about other false eschatological beliefs.

**6**

**HAS THE TRIBULATION ALREADY HAPPENED?**

**Introduction**

Many theologians believe that the Tribulation has already occurred (preterism). This chapter will examine whether preterism stands up to early church and scriptural scrutiny.

Preterism (based on the Latin word for “the past”) is an eschatological view that interprets most (partial preterism) or all (full preterism) prophecies concerning the end-time in the Bible as events that have already occurred by AD 70 (the fall of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple). Full preterism believes that the Tribulation and Second Coming occurred during this time, and partial preterism believes that just the Tribulation happened with Emperor Nero being the Antichrist.

Several well-known modern pastors and theologians believe in preterism, including Hank Hanegraaff, Kenneth Gentry, Sigmund Brouwer, and R. C. Sproul.

The earliest church father who possibly believed in preterism was the bishop and historian Eusebius of Caesarea, who wrote around AD 300. He states:

When, then, we see what was of old foretold for the nations fulfilled in our own day, and when the lamentation and wailing that was predicted for the Jews, and the burning of the temple and its utter desolation, can also be seen even now to have occurred according to the prediction, surely we must also agree that the King who was prophesied, the Christ of God, has come, since the signs of His coming have been shewn in each instance I have treated to have been clearly fulfilled.66

But Eusebius also saw the book of Revelation being authored toward the end of the first century (around AD 95), after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.67 So it is strange that he might equate the prophecies of Revelation as occurring before the date of its authorship. We will discuss Eusebius’s non-preterist beliefs later in this chapter. There are no other early church documents that hold a preterist view.

Preterism was later made popular by Spanish Jesuit Luis De Alcazar (AD 1554–AD 1613). His commentary was “Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse.” He attempted to counteract Historicism, the Protestant view at the time, which saw the pope as the Antichrist and Catholicism as the Antichrist system. We will talk about Historicism in the next chapter.

Alcazar and other preterists teach that most of the prophecies in the gospels and Revelation had already taken place by AD 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. This belief also treats Christ’s Second Coming as a spiritual return, not a physical one. Partial preterism sees that the physical Second Coming is yet to come. They believe in a two-phase Second Coming, with the first occurring spiritually in AD 70,68 and the second phase occurring in the future. Both believe that God is basically through dealing with Israel. They see no prophetic future for national Israel, and their present state is an accident of history. They also reject the idea of a coming Day of the Lord Armageddon war, Rapture of believers, and millennium. Most preterists also believe that the millennium is symbolic, and we have been in it since AD 70. They believe that the preaching of Christ started the millennium (contrary to what is stated explicitly throughout the Old Testament and Revelation).

But in truth, most prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. And the millennium can’t have started yet. For example, Joel 3:17 is a prophecy that has not yet been fulfilled: “Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.” As national Israel has yet to know Christ, and it is currently surrounded by armies that despise her, it is quite clear that Joel’s prophecy about Israel has not yet happened.

**The Early Church View**

The early church, before AD 300 (Eusebius), was unanimous that the events around the Second Coming would occur in the future and did not occur by AD 70. Those who experienced the violent reign of Emperor Nero (AD 54–68) and destruction of the temple (AD 70) did not believe that they were experiencing the Tribulation, nor that Nero was the Antichrist, nor that Christ had already returned. Early church writings by such as Polycarp (AD 69–AD 155) and Irenaeus (AD 130–AD 200) discount the idea of preterism.69

The first-century treatise, the Didache, also known as The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, holds that the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24) is about the end of history and not about what occurred in AD 70. The Apostolic Fathers who wrote the Didache and had personal contact with the apostles included Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna.70 Didache 16:1, 4 shows the Tribulation happening sometime in the future:

Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh … For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began.

Similarly, second-century early church father Justin Martyr writes about the Tribulation and Second Coming:

Two advents of Christ have been announced: the one, in which He is set forth as suffering, inglorious, dishonored, and crucified; but the other, in which He shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy, who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians … the rest of the prophecy shall be fulfilled at His Second Coming.71

These quotes show that early church fathers did not believe that the church went through the Tribulation. Nor did they think Nero was the Antichrist since these discourses were written long after Nero’s reign and the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

**Dating of Revelation**

Full and partial preterists attempt to date the authorship of Revelation before AD 70. Preterists Ken Gentry and R. C. Sproul agree that their whole premise would fall apart if apostle John wrote Revelation after that date.74 75

Most scholars date the writing of the book of Revelation to around AD 95, a full twenty-five years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

If Revelation were composed in about AD 95, then John’s prophecies in that book must relate to their fulfillment after that time. Preterists must prove an earlier date of authorship even to consider their theories.

According to Irenaeus, Polycarp, a direct disciple of John, told him that the writing of Revelation occurred in the last days of the Roman Emperor Domitian. His reign went from AD 81 to AD 96, so John must have written Revelation during the 90s.

Irenaeus writes:

[I]f it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him [John] who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian’s reign.76

Another source defending a post-AD 70 writing of the Book of Revelation is early church leader Victorinus (d. AD 304). In his commentary on the book of Revelation, he stated that John had his vision of the apocalypse while “he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Caesar Domitian” (*Commentary on Revelation* 10:11). Thus, we again see evidence that John’s writing of Revelation on the island of Patmos occurred during the rule of Domitian.

Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 260–AD 340) is known as “the father of church history” due to his classic work *Ecclesiastical History.* Despite one small vague apparent preterist comment (quoted at the beginning of this chapter), most of his writing does not support preterism. He also dates the book of Revelation to the reign of Domitian: “It is said that in this persecution the apostle and evangelist John, who was still alive, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos in consequence of his testimony to the divine word.”77 Eusebius went on to defend Irenaeus’s work in which he showed that John wrote Revelation “towards the end of Domitian’s reign” (quoted above).

Sulpitius Severus was an early church ecclesiastical writer who died about AD 420. In chapter 31 of book 2 of his *Sacred History*, we read: “Then, after an interval, Domitian, the son of Vespasian, persecuted the Christians. At this date, he banished John the Apostle and Evangelist, to the island of Patmos.”

A final example is Jerome, who translated the scriptures into Latin and lived from AD 340 to AD 419. He states that John was exiled under Domitian, where he wrote Revelation.78

These and other writings of our early church leaders make it clear that the writing of Revelation came at least two decades after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. That being the case, preterism falls on the weight of its incorrect assumptions.

Find out what the Bible teaches about preterism in the full version.

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**7**

**OTHER ERRONEOUS END-TIME DOCTRINES**

**Introduction**

In the previous three chapters, we have explored how the post-Tribulation Rapture position was the view held by the early church and holds up to proper exegesis of scripture on the topic. Based on this analysis, the pre-Tribulation Rapture and preterist theories cannot be true. This chapter will look into mid-Tribulation (the Rapture occurs midway during the Tribulation), and pre-Wrath (the Rapture happens before God’s wrath is poured out sometime toward the end of the Tribulation). Also, we will cover historicism (the fulfillment of prophecies found in Daniel, the Gospels, and Revelation have been occurring since the death and ascension of Christ), postmillennialism (Christ returns after the millennium), and amillennialism (there is no literal one-thousand-year millennium).

**Mid-Tribulation and Pre-Wrath**

The mid-Tribulation view believes the Rapture occurs three-half-and-a-years into the seven-year Tribulation. The pre-Wrath doctrine sees the Rapture happening just before the pouring out of God’s Wrath near the end of the Tribulation. However, pre-Wrath and mid-Tribulation are in error for many of the same reasons as pre-Tribulation, which we saw in chapter 5. All of them believe that Christians are delivered from God’s wrath either before the Tribulation (pre-Trib) or at some time during the Tribulation (mid-Trib and pre-Wrath) via the Rapture.

However, as we saw in chapters 4 and 5, we know that deliverance from God’s wrath can either mean protection from God’s wrath during the Tribulation or that His wrath occurs at the end of the Tribulation when we are raptured. Furthermore, nowhere in the Bible or early church writings do the authors teach a two-phase Second Coming with Jesus first descending partially at the Rapture and then at a later date fully returning to earth. As we are showing throughout the book, the Rapture and Second Coming will happen simultaneously and are different aspects of the same event.

Both mid-Trib and pre-Wrath views see the Rapture occurring at the seventh trumpet, and this trumpet is blown in the middle or toward the end of the Tribulation. They believe this because the seventh trumpet is mentioned between the seal judgments in chapter 6 of Revelation and the bowl judgments that occur later in chapter 16. They think that this is a chronological characterization of events. But as we saw in chapters 4 and 5 of this book, Revelation was not written chronologically, and the seventh trumpet, the last trumpet, is sounded at the end of the Tribulation. In these chapters, we also referenced Acts 3:21 and Hebrews 10:12–13, which clearly place the Rapture at the end of the Tribulation.

**Historicism**

Martin Luther and John Calvin held the view of historicism, which holds that the fulfillment of prophecy found in Revelation has occurred throughout history and continues to do so. Luther and Calvin saw themselves as the true church (the reformers) and the kingdom of the Antichrist (the Catholic Church) as fulfilling prophecy in Daniel and Revelation. The Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses also hold to historicism. In most cases, the Antichrist is believed to be the contemporary pope.

Victorinus of Pettau (ca. AD 300) was the earliest proponent of historicism.87 Historicism became the prominent view among non-Catholic Christians from that time until the mid-1800s. It teaches that the prophecies in Daniel, the Gospels, and Revelation are being played out from biblical times to the present and will continue to do so until the Second Coming of Christ.88 They see these prophecies in a spiritual sense, not a literal sense, making it challenging to characterize their often wildly divergent interpretations of prophecy. Historicist beliefs have been continually revised and updated throughout history as new events occur and new figures emerge on the world scene.89 Among the proponents of historicism were John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale, and many other Protestant reformers and church leaders of their time.

Charles Wesley incorrectly predicted that the end of the world would occur in 1794, based on his analysis of the book of Revelation and his belief in historicism.90

During the nineteenth century, American Baptist preacher William Miller predicted the end of the world would occur on October 22, 1844, based on his historicist interpretation of Daniel 8. His views spawned a national movement known as Millerism. Some of the adherents of this view began the Seventh-day Adventist Church.91

In the 1900s, the historicist view began to be challenged and marginalized by mainstream Protestant theologians. Kai Arasola, a Seventh-day Adventist Church administrator in Sweden, wrote his doctoral dissertation recanting historicism. Arasola discounted Millerism, which became the object of ridicule by that church.92

Historicism widened the divide between Protestants and Catholics for hundreds of years. Historicists believe that Catholicism is the Antichrist system, and that the pope was or will be the Antichrist.93

The Church of England’s 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith illustrates this widespread view that Protestants held supporting historicism: “There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof, but is that Antichrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the church, against Christ and all that is called God.”94

According to 1 John 4:2–3, the antichrist spirit denies that Jesus has come in the flesh and that He is not divine. Catholicism and the pope believe in Christ’s divinity and that He came as a man over two thousand years ago. This fact alone negates the possibility that the Antichrist will be the pope and thus is one reason why historicism cannot be accurate. Also, as we will see in chapter 10, the Antichrist will come from the Middle East, not from Rome.

Debunking historicism is particularly important because it further divides Catholics and Protestants.

The followers of historicism reference Revelation 17:9–10 as a proof text that the Antichrist will come from Rome and Roman Catholicism: “This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.”

Since Rome was known to be the “City on Seven Hills,” historicists see this as clear evidence of a Roman Antichrist (the pope). But a closer look at verses 9 and 10 shows that these hills refer to seven kings and kingdoms and do not refer to Rome. They are seven kingdoms that have persecuted or will persecute the Jews throughout time. The “five have fallen” refers to Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece. The “one is” would refer to Rome, since this kingdom was present at the time of the writing of Revelation. The other to come would most likely be the Islamic Empire; we will talk about these five kingdoms in chapter 11. Historicists also do not believe in a literal Tribulation.

Interestingly, early church writings do not contain this teaching before AD 300. Apostle John’s disciples and their disciples did not believe in historicism but believed in a future literal fulfillment of prophecies found in Revelation.

Learn why amillennialism and postmillennialism are in error in the full version.

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**Concluding Remarks**

We have seen in this chapter that mid-Tribulation, pre-Wrath, historicism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism do not line up with scripture. The apostles and early church fathers did not teach these views. Furthermore, historicism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism take prophetic scriptures as symbolic and force their meaning to fit into their paradigm. An abundance of scriptures teaches a literal Tribulation and thousand-year reign of Christ, further proving that post-Tribulation premillennial theology is the correct view. That is, Christ will come on the Day of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation (post-Tribulation) and will reign on earth for one thousand years (premillennial). Events of the Tribulation and millennium are discussed later in chapters 10–13.

In the next chapter, we will explore what is next on the prophetic horizon before the Tribulation commences.

**8**

**IS THE TIME OF THE END APPROACHING, AND WHAT**’**S NEXT?**

Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.—Mark 13:29

**Introduction**

In the previous two chapters, we saw that preterism, mid-Tribulation, pre-Wrath, historicism, amillennialism, and postmillennialism simply do not hold up under biblical scrutiny compared with post-Tribulation, a literal future Tribulation and millennium. During the time of the end, there will be a Tribulation, and Christians will live through it; there will be a Day of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation when Christ will rapture His people and come to earth and establish His reign for a thousand years.

This chapter will first look at the signs—events and occurrences—that signal that the time of the end (precursor to the Tribulation and Second Coming) is approaching. Second, we will speculate on the approximate timing of the Tribulation and Second Coming. Third, we will show that chapter 8 of the book of Daniel points to specific countries that will be in conflict before the Tribulation. These conflicts involve the rise and conquests by (modern) Iran, followed inevitably by the overtaking of Iran by (modern) Turkey. Finally, we will expose some recent false teaching about events leading up to the Tribulation.

**Signs That We Are Approaching the Time of the End**

Jesus also said that the seven-year Tribulation would be shortened, which may be why we will not know the precise day of His Return: “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:22).

With so much more written about the Day of the Lord/Second Coming than the First Coming, we should know when that day is near; “and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25b).

First, we will look at events that have already occurred, such as adverse events, the establishment of the Jewish state, increase in knowledge, world travel, increased persecution of Christians, the gospel preached throughout the world, evil increasing, and Jews preparing for a third temple.

Jesus warned about increasing strife: wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, and hatred. He spoke of signs in the sun, moon, and stars and said: “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:8–28).

One event that many Christians had been watching for is the rebirth of the nation of Israel. Their watchfulness was rewarded on May 14, 1948. This rebirth had to occur with so many prophecies about Israel in the Bible concerning the end-time. Isaiah 66:8 foretold this in the eighth century BC. “Who has ever heard of such things? Who has ever seen things like this? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment?” Jesus referred to this event in Matthew 24:32–35 as a budding fig tree.

The miracle of Israel’s becoming a nation again has been a pivotal event in biblical end-time prophecy. Furthermore, coupled with the gospel being preached throughout the Middle East, it has also opened the eyes of Christians and non-Christians alike that we are living in extraordinary times.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole *world* as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (emphasis added). The Greek word for the *world* here is *oikoumenē*. It can mean, according to *Strong*’*s Concordance*: “the inhabited earth, the portion of the earth inhabited by the Greeks (in distinction from the lands of the barbarians), the Roman empire, all the subjects of the empire, the whole inhabited earth, the world, the inhabitants of the earth, men, the universe.” But Middle East countries are the only areas that end-time prophecy refers to in Daniel and other books like Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Therefore, Jesus was talking about the gospel reaching the Middle East and possibly the entire world.

We should be open to the fact that most of these prophecies may only refer to the Middle East, but also potentially to the whole world. It is obvious, however, that in either case the entire world will be affected by end-time events.

The Bible and gospel have been distributed worldwide, including in the Middle East. Media such as television, radio, print, and computers have allowed this to happen extremely rapidly. Christian television such as SAT-7 reaches many countries. Their website states: “We’re making God’s love visible to 25 million viewers across the Middle East and North Africa through Christian satellite television. A potential audience of 500 million people can hear the Truth in their languages of Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish.”101

For the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14 to occur, the gospel may have to be preached to the entire world or limited to the Middle East. Revelation speaks about an angel preaching the gospel to the whole earth (Revelation 14:6). So, this prophecy about the entire world or Middle East hearing the gospel could be fulfilled finally by this angel.

Another verse suggests that both knowledge and travel will increase in the end-time: “But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the Time of the End. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge” (Daniel 12:4).

Knowledge with the invention of the computer and internet has increased exponentially. A study by the American Clinical and Climatological Association in 2011 on medical knowledge highlights this:

It is estimated that the doubling time of medical knowledge in 1950 was 50 years; in 1980, 7 years; and in 2010, 3.5 years. In 2020 it was projected to be 0.2 years—just 73 days. Students who began medical school in the autumn of 2010 will experience approximately three doublings in knowledge by the time they complete the minimum length of training (7 years) needed to practice medicine. Students who graduate in 2020 will experience four doublings in knowledge.102

Similarly, the advent of air travel has allowed people to go “here and there” rapidly worldwide.

Matthew 24:9–12 talks about increasing wars, famines, persecution of Christians, apostasy, betraying and hating one another, false prophets, and most people’s love growing cold. It is hard to pinpoint the countdown with this prophecy because these types of things have been happening since Jesus foretold them. Jesus said that these would be “the beginning of birth pangs,” so they will increase in frequency as the day draws near.

A BBC article documents a report ordered by Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, which states that Christians are currently the most persecuted religious group in the world. It is estimated that one in three Christians suffer persecution for their faith. Also, “The interim report said the main impact of ‘genocidal acts against Christians is exodus’ and that Christianity faced being ‘wiped out’ from parts of the Middle East.”103

Regarding the current state of Christian persecution within the Middle East, the archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, states: “Many [Christians] have left. Hundreds of thousands have been forced from their homes. Many have been killed, enslaved and persecuted or forcibly converted. Even those who remain ask the question, ‘Why stay?’ Christians in the Middle East are facing ‘imminent extinction.’ The Archbishop goes on to state they experience ‘daily threat of murder’ and the situation was the worst since the Mongol invasions of the 13th century.”104

Pew Research also has found a 66 percent rise in persecution of Christians between 2009 to 2016.105

Paul characterizes the time of the end in his second letter to Timothy. In this letter, Paul discusses the degradation of people’s hearts, which seems to fit our society today:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. (2 Timothy 3:3–5)

In Matthew 24:15 Jesus refers to the book of Daniel when he states that the Antichrist will desecrate the temple. That means the rebuilding of the temple must occur either before or during the Tribulation.

Furthermore, Paul states that the Antichrist will set himself up to be God in the Tribulation temple. So again, the future reconstruction of the Jewish temple will be a sign and symbol of these time of the end events. It is but one more thing we can look for in our anticipation of what is to come next: “He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s Temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

The Temple Institute in Jerusalem is committed to seeing that the temple will be reconstructed. One of the institute’s requirements for dedication or initial sacrifice of the new temple will be a perfect red heifer for dedicating the temple mentioned in Numbers 19:2b: “Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke.”

On August 28, 2018, a red heifer without spot or blemish was born in Israel. The Temple Institute is raising this heifer. The rabbinical experts state that the heifer needs continual evaluation for any disqualifying defects through natural causes. They have been waiting for the red heifer, and now they have one.

**Daniel**’**s Prophecies about What Is Next**

When we see prophesied events unfold prior to the Tribulation, it is time to ramp up our preparedness.

We will look at actual future events that scripture describes, particularly in the book of Daniel, using the historical geographic interpretation method (see chapter 3), to interpret what is next. When applying this method, we will be looking at modern countries that currently inhabit the ancient areas used in the Bible during the time of the prophets’ writings. We will further assume that these modern countries will still exist during the time of the end. Finally, we will address the religions of these modern countries and their relation to their biblical ancestors.

We can find specific prophecy in Daniel relating to events leading up to the Tribulation. When we see these things begin to happen, we know the countdown to the arrival of the Antichrist and the return of Christ will begin.

The book of Daniel was written approximately six hundred years before Christ and described a future Sunni/Shia war in the Middle East that will occur first between Iran and other countries like Turkey, Iraq, and others. These wars will set the stage for the coming kingdom of the Antichrist. We will discuss this more in detail later in this chapter.

According to the Institute for Economics and Peace, the Middle East and North Africa are the least stable and most violent regions in the world.106 Daniel 8 includes one of the most direct scriptures in the Bible on what to expect next in the Middle East (see next section). Also, the angel Gabriel gives Daniel the interpretation of this expectation and says that the prophecy concerns “the Time of the End.” Gabriel uses this phrase in verses 17 and 19 in the ESV translation. We know that the events found at the beginning of Daniel 8 will occur just prior to the Tribulation because of their chronological order and the fact that the Antichrist arrives on the scene immediately thereafter.

**Find out how Daniel 8 is a specific prophecy that precedes the Tribulation and begins the time of the end. And, is Russia in prophecy? Did the early church predict the timing of the Tribulation and Second Coming?** <https://www.westbowpress.com/en/bookstore/bookdetails/840755-when-the-perfect-comes>

**Is There a Psalm 83 War before the Tribulation?**

Like Ezekiel 38, some theologians, including Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum,124 look at Psalm 83 to conclude incorrectly that there will be a war before the Tribulation between Israel and countries mentioned in that Psalm 83:

With one mind they plot together; they form an alliance against you—the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, of Moab and the Hagrites, Byblos, Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre. Even Assyria has joined them to reinforce Lot’s descendants … Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like chaff before the wind. As fire consumes the forest or a flame sets the mountains ablaze, so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. (Psalm 83:5–8, 13–15)

But like Ezekiel 38, it is essential to interpret Psalm 83 correctly. If viewed as events prior to the Tribulation, we would see Israel victorious and occupying large swaths of land in the Middle East during that time. Actually, Israel will be defeated in the Tribulation and scattered again throughout other Middle Eastern nations, as we will see in chapter 11. The Israeli victory over these countries in Psalm 83 only occurs on the Day of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation, which we will discuss in chapter 12.

**9**

**REASONS FOR THE TRIBULATION**

**Introduction**

We have seen how the Tribulation and Christ’s Second Coming could very well happen within the next few years. This chapter covers why there will be a Tribulation. In the following two chapters, we will be covering who the Antichrist might be and what the Old Testament prophets, Jesus, Paul, and John say about the Tribulation period, the most trying time in history. Looking at all of them, we will get a good picture of what will happen in this time of trouble and wrath. Modern Turkey will spawn the Antichrist, who will begin his devastation and control over the Middle East. Israel will experience another dispersion, with many in Israel being displaced and taken captive to surrounding nations. Also, there will be a massive increase in evil, disease, famine, war, and natural disasters. Most people’s love will grow cold—even Christians! The Antichrist will spearhead his attack on Christians and Jews. False teachers and false Christs will emerge and deceive many, including Christians.

There is so much in the Bible concerning this time that we will not be able to cover it all, but we will attempt to speak to the aspects that really pertain to our lives. With so much scripture addressing the Tribulation, it is apparent that God wants us to understand, prepare, and act accordingly.

This chapter will first look at the signs—events and occurrences—that signal that the time of the end (precursor to the Tribulation and Second Coming) is approaching. Second, we will speculate on the approximate timing of the Tribulation and Second Coming. Third, we will show that chapter 8 of the book of Daniel points to specific countries that will be in conflict before the Tribulation. These conflicts involve the rise and conquests by (modern) Iran, followed inevitably by the overtaking of Iran by (modern) Turkey. Finally, we will expose some recent false teaching about events leading up to the Tribulation.

**Why the Tribulation?**

This is a difficult question to answer. Why does God allow suffering? Why does He allow evil? These questions perplex all of us.

There are at least eight reasons for the Tribulation.

1. People will break their covenant with God: We get a glimpse of an answer in the book of Isaiah as to a reason for the Tribulation: “The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth’s inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left” (Isaiah 24:5–6).

We also see the poor deprived of their rights, justice withheld, and the fatherless and widows treated poorly (Isaiah 10:1–3).

Leading up to and in the Tribulation, only a few will follow Christ and walk uprightly before God. As Isaiah writes, most people “must bear their guilt”—those whose guilt is not covered by the blood of Christ—because they have not acknowledged Him and received His sacrificial offering.

2. God’s patience for humankind’s repentance ends: God has been reaching out to humanity in a spirit of grace since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. However, there will come a point when God’s patience runs out, and He will “not leave the guilty unpunished.” Israel tried God’s forbearance repeatedly in the Old Testament, but eventually, His judgment came down on them: “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, [is] slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:6b-7a).

So, there will come a point in history when God’s tolerance ends and the Tribulation begins. God’s grace will not affect the wicked in a positive way—they will refuse to do right and continue in their evil ways: “When your judgments come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness. But when grace is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil and do not regard the majesty of the Lord” (Isaiah 26:9b-10).

3. Christians’ faith will be tested as never before: Christians will go through the Tribulation, as was discussed in chapter 4. Why will this be? Trials and tribulations are found throughout human history. It is important to consider what apostle John meant when he wrote that “God is love.” If we first have this foundational understanding, we can better understand the purpose of suffering. God being love, love is His motivation in all things. The book of James says that the testing of our faith produces patience and that its full effect is to make us perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:3). Suffering has a way of purifying us and drawing us to God—if we allow it to do so. In speaking of the Tribulation period, Daniel writes, “Many will be purified, made spotless and refined” (Daniel 12:10a).

This suffering and resultant purification, according to Paul, make Christians worthy of the kingdom of God: “Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering” (2 Thessalonians 2:4–5).

Trials prove the genuineness of our faith, which results in praise, glory, and honor when Christ is revealed (1 Peter 1:5–7).

Christians will also experience the Tribulation because of their calling to support their loved ones and friends, lead them to the One who will see them through it, and save their eternal souls.

Not only will the Tribulation purify us, but it will also begin the end of wickedness and evil people. God loves us so much that He will do this to prevent evil from affecting His children. We previously spoke about God shielding His followers in the Tribulation in chapter 5 and will elaborate on it in chapter 11.

4. Israel will continue the apostasy they displayed throughout their history: Before we discuss this issue, I want to affirm that the Gentiles owe a massive debt to the Jews. Jews and Israel have been an essential mechanism by which God has revealed Himself to the entire world. Through the nation of Israel, all nations will be blessed and highly esteemed in the kingdom of God. Countries will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16) and go to the temple of “the God of Jacob” (Micah 4:2).

The Gentiles’ debt of gratitude to Israel is because they are grafted into the life of God through the Jews’ Messiah (Romans 11:17). Also, Gentile believers contributed financially to poor Jewish believers, and apostle Paul said that they owed it to the Jews because they received spiritual blessings from the Jews (Romans 15:27).

God loves the Jewish people and has chosen them, but they will experience tremendous suffering in the Tribulation: “How awful that day will be! No other will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7). We will talk about Israel’s suffering during this time in chapter 11.

This suffering of the Jewish people will eventually result in those accepting Christ as their Messiah to be grafted back into the “natural olive tree”—the life of God (Romans 11:24–27). It will also end the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile forever and create one new family in the kingdom of God (Matthew 24:42–43).

Find out why Israel will experience the Tribulation and be scattered throughout the Middle East in the full version.

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We have seen in this chapter reasons why the Tribulation will happen and affect all people. Let’s now look at who the Antichrist will be and some of his actions.

**10**

**THE ANTICHRIST**

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise.—Daniel 8:23

Most of us have heard of a coming Antichrist who will one day rule. He will be the most evil person in history—the embodiment of Satan. He will usher in more destruction to Jews and Christians than ever before.

In all generations since Christ, people have looked at their current circumstances and applied eschatology regarding who the Antichrist might be without performing sound exegesis on the subject. We should be watching for the signs given to us. In this chapter, we will explore what those signs are. But first, let’s look at what the Bible says about this individual without relying on our emotions.

There will be many false messiahs in the Tribulation performing miraculous signs (Matthew 24: 22–23). One of these false messiahs will be the Antichrist. He will oppose and seek to take the place of Jesus.

Some say he will come from Europe or the Americas; others from the Middle East and will be Islamic, Jewish, or European. Others say he might even be the pope. Many American presidents and other world leaders have been accused of being the Antichrist. It appears as if the public’s mood of its current circumstances largely frames the opinions of who this character is or will be.

Robert Fuller, a professor of religious studies at Bradley University, said, “The Antichrist idea is very responsive to changes in current events, it’s a symbol for what is most unsettling or troubling.”139

Let’s look at some of the descriptions of the Antichrist and where the Bible says he will come from and his attributes so that when he does arrive, we will be able to identify him. It is good to be open to all possibilities, and not to be caught off guard or be swept up by what is politically fashionable.

The Antichrist will be Islamic, as shown below. But we should be careful about putting labels on anyone who appears to fit his description until he fulfills specific signs foretold in God’s Word.

**The Early Church**’**s Beliefs About the Antichrist**

As we discussed in chapter 8, the book of Daniel will be sealed until the time of the end, so views on who the Antichrist is before the book’s unsealing will most likely be wrong. But let’s look at what the early church believed about the Antichrist.

The second-century writer Irenaeus (disciple of Polycarp, disciple of John) proposed that the Jewish tribe of Dan would birth the Antichrist.140 Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome also attested that the Antichrist would be a Jew.141

We saw in chapter 7 that those who are proponents of historicism believe that a future pope would eventually be the Antichrist. This view began around AD 300 and continued through the Reformation, and many believe this today. “For centuries the papacy was the unanimous antichrist candidate.”142

**Find out how the Antichrist will be Islamic in the full version.**

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**Acts of the Antichrist**

The Beast (Antichrist) conceals his true nature behind words of peace, and his spokesman (the False Prophet) is portrayed as a “lamb” and a “dragon” in Revelation 13:11. Islam hides behind the veneer of peace but is responsible for much of the violence in the world today. We see in Surah 9:5 of the Quran that Muslims are told to “fight and kill the disbelievers wherever you find them, take them captive, torture them, and lie in wait and ambush them using every stratagem of war.” There are 123 verses in the Quran that call for Muslims to war with nonbelievers.183 Muslims who do not join the fight are called hypocrites and are warned that Allah will send them to hell (Quran 8:15–16).

Jesus is called “Isa” in Islamic literature. In their view, when Jesus returns, his one purpose is to assist the Mahdi/Antichrist and convert all to Islam.

The Antichrist/Mahdi will behead anyone who does not serve him and the cause of Allah. He will specifically target Christians and Jews: “Fight against such of those who have been given the scripture [Jews and Christians] as believe not in Allah” (Sura 9:29). John describes this persecution in Revelation 20:4: “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the Word of God.”

It is interesting to note that Shariah law permits beheading and is the only governing law globally that does so. We find in the Quran, “I shall cast terror into the heart of the unbeliever, strike off their head” (Sura 8:12). We see this happening today in the Middle East, and it will only increase during the Tribulation.

A Pew Research study revealed: “Acceptance of Sharia as the revealed word of God is high across South Asia and most of the Middle East and North Africa. For example, roughly eight-in-ten Muslims (81%) in Pakistan and Jordan say Sharia is the revealed word of God, as do clear majorities in most other countries surveyed in these two regions.”184

We find that the Antichrist will change laws and the calendar. Could this possibly relate to the Shariah law of Islam and the Islamic *hijra* calendar? Could it relate to Jewish holidays and feasts? “He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws” (Daniel 7:25).

Most of us have heard of the mark of the beast. It is described in Revelation as the number 666, and it will be on the forehead or right hand of all those who worship the Antichrist. The mark of the beast will be placed on the forehead, representing our will, or placed on the back of the hand, representing our actions.

It [the False Prophet] also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast [the Antichrist] or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666. (Revelation 13:16–18)

By the way, this mark will be the antithesis of the seal of God that will be placed upon believers’ foreheads (Revelation 7:3–4, 9:4, 14:1, 22:4).

The Greek word for mark here is *charagma* which can mean a stamp, mark, or badge. Many have speculated that this mark is associated with a computer chip embedded under the skin that could track everyone’s buying and selling, as well as track all their whereabouts. Some also feel that this mark is figurative, like Christians being sealed by God and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13).

The concept of people being marked in biblical times is not uncommon. According to English classicist and orientalist H. W. H. Saggs, “There is historical evidence that, in the ancient Babylonian culture, slaves were identified by … some kind of mark, either tattooed or branded on the face or the back of the hand.”185 It is interesting to note that the mark is given *on* the right hand or forehead. It is not implanted under the skin. The Greek word in Revelation 13:16 is *epi*, which means over or upon, not in.

In Revelation 13 the Antichrist is referred to as the “first beast” and the False Prophet is referred to as the “second beast.” The False Prophet performs miracles, which include causing fire to come down from heaven (Revelation 13:13–15). The signs deceive people. They set up an image in honor of the Antichrist. The False Prophet makes the image talk and kills those who don’t worship it. He also forces humankind to take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:11–17). The False Prophet is called the second beast in verse 15. These events are another reason why Christians in the Tribulation need to know the signs and have faith and endurance.

The Quran also talks about a beast that will speak to men in the end-time about having faith in Islam. “And then the word is fulfilled concerning them. We shall bring forth a beast of the earth to speak unto them because mankind had not faith in our revelations” (Sura 27:82). It is possible that this beast is the second beast, the False Prophet.

The False Prophet causes most people to worship the Antichrist, the first beast, and take his mark. Satan, the Antichrist, and False Prophet are a type of perverted and evil trinity, a dark but pathetic echo of the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will perform miracles and use deception to get people to follow them and to receive the beast’s mark. Those who refuse will not be able to buy or sell and will risk execution. Taking the mark of the beast is tantamount to denying the Triune God and will result in being subject to God’s fiery wrath and the torment of hell.

A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name.” (Revelation 14:9–11)

Find out what the mark of the beast is in the full version.

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Similarly, apostle Paul wrote about how the Antichrist will defile the rebuilt Jewish temple during the Tribulation and about how he will claim to be God: “He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

When we see the temple rebuilt and the abomination that causes desolation occur, we will know for sure who the Antichrist is. As we have already shown, the Antichrist will almost certainly be coming from the Middle East, and he will be Islamic.

**11**

**THE TRIBULATION**

**Tribulation According to Old Testament Prophets**

**The Antichrist**’**s Power during the Tribulation in Daniel 8**

We will now pick up where we left off in chapter 8 of this book, which describes the arrival of the Antichrist and Tribulation period. Remember in that chapter that the goat (New Turkey) will conquer the ram (New Iran). This section describes how four horns (kings) will rise from New Turkey. Out of one of those four horns, another horn will rise:

The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven … The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. (Daniel 8:8, 22)

The four goat horns represent four kingdoms, according to the angel Gabriel in Daniel 8:22, and the new horn that emerges will be the Antichrist. In other words, out of one of these four kingdoms, the Antichrist will arise and begin his conquest of the Middle East. He will take over Egypt to the south and countries to the east and approach Israel, which is described as “toward the Beautiful Land”: “Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry hosts down to the earth and trampled on them” (Daniel 8:9–10).

The Antichrist will reach the “host of the heavens,” which are either demons or angels. The above verse may be in reference to Revelation 12 where demons are hurled to the earth. The word here in Hebrew for “host” is *tsaba*, which means angels/demons in the context of war. So, there will be much demonic activity during the Tribulation. He will invade a large area, including Israel, while the people feel secure (Daniel 7:23, 11:21).

The Antichrist will exalt himself trying to be as great as Jesus, “the commander of the army of the Lord.” This phrase was also used in Joshua 5:13–15, referring to Christ. As discussed in chapter 10, in his assault against Jesus, the Antichrist will also stop sacrifices in the newly built Jewish temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 12:11). During that time, he will prosper in everything he does, and truth will not matter. He will also destroy the Lord’s people, both Christians and Jews: “It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord; it [the Antichrist] took away the daily sacrifice from the Lord, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the Lord’s people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground” (Daniel 8:11–12).

The angel Gabriel continues with the interpretation:

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king [the Antichrist], a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. (Daniel 8:23–25a)

People in rebellion against Christ will be utterly wicked. The Antichrist will be strong “but not by his own power.” It will be by the power of Satan. He will cause “astounding devastation” in the Middle East.

When New Turkey conquers New Iran and subdivides it into four kingdoms, one from which the Mahdi/Caliph/Antichrist will arise, he takes control of almost all the Middle East throughout the Tribulation.

**War between the Kings of the North and the South**

When the Antichrist, King of the North, establishes his authority in the Middle East, he will then go to war against the King of the South (Egypt). He will overthrow it, along with Libya and Cush (modern-day Sudan). The Antichrist will also invade Edom, Moab, and Ammon (modern-day Jordan) but will not overtake them. So evidently, Jordon will not be overthrown by the Antichrist. The Antichrist will, at this time, “invade the Beautiful Land” (Israel):

At the time of the end [during the Tribulation] the king of the South [Egypt] will engage him in battle, and the king of the North [the Antichrist] will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land [Israel]. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushites in submission. (Daniel 11:40–43)

Jeremiah 4:6 also prophecies about the Lord “bringing evil from the north,” which tells us that the Antichrist will lead an end-time army and invade Israel, scattering them among the nations. The Antichrist will disperse the Israelites to the surrounding countries. God will bring the Jews back to the land of Israel on the Day of the Lord:

“Therefore behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that it shall no more be said, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ but, ‘The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.’ For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.” (Jeremiah 16:14–15)

As we saw in Daniel and Jeremiah, Ezekiel also prophecies that the Antichrist armies will invade Egypt, Cush (Sudan), Libya, and Israel. Also, he says that Arabia (Saudi Arabia) and Kub (a land near Egypt) will have “a sword [that] will come against” them. We know this refers to the end-time, as Ezekiel 30 tells us this will occur around the time of the Day of the Lord:

Wail and say, “Alas for that day!” For the day is near, the day of the Lord is near—a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations. A sword will come against Egypt, and anguish will come upon Cush. When the slain fall in Egypt, her wealth will be carried away and her foundations torn down. Cush and Libya, Lydia [western Asia Minor] and all Arabia, Kub and the people of the covenant land will fall by the sword along with Egypt. (Ezekiel 30:2a-5)

This prophecy repeats itself a third time in Isaiah:

Then the Lord said, “Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush, so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt’s shame. Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be dismayed and put to shame. In that day the people who live on this coast will say, ‘See what has happened to those we relied on, those we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of Assyria! How then can we escape?’” (Isaiah 20:3–6)

Again, the Antichrist is referred to as the “king of Assyria,” further stating that he will arise from the Middle East and take captive Egypt and Sudan (Cush).

Also, Isaiah 19:2 states that before Egypt is invaded by the Antichrist, it will be in a civil war. “I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.”

As we talked about in chapter 10 on the Antichrist, Daniel states that the Antichrist will begin the Tribulation by signing a peace agreement with Israel for seven years. Vernon Richards, an Anglo-Italian anarchist who died in 2001, states: “The true Islamic concept of peace goes something like this: ‘Peace comes through submission to Muhammad and his concept of Allah’ (i.e., Islam). As such the Islamic concept of peace, meaning making the whole world Muslim, is actually a mandate for war.”188

Think about the Orwellian language that Islam and the Antichrist will use. War is peace, and peace is war.

**Find out how the Tribulation will begin and if the Antichrist will invade Israel and what the New Testament teaches about the Tribulation.**

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**12**

**THE DAY OF THE LORD**

The resurrection, Rapture and Second Coming occur at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. As mentioned in the introduction to this book, the Second Coming of Christ is described in scripture eight times as often as His First Coming and is prophesied more frequently than any other event in the Bible. The Day of the Lord includes the destruction of evil and the setting up of the kingdom of God (Zechariah 14:9).

In chapter 4 we learned that Jesus must stay in heaven until the time of restoration of all things, the thousand-year millennium (Acts 3:21). He waits at the right hand of God until his enemies become His footstool (Hebrews 10:12–13). Christ leaves heaven on the Day of the Lord at the end of the Tribulation. He does not Rapture the church before or during the Tribulation, as we proved in chapters 4–7.

The resurrection of dead believers and rapture of living believers occur as we meet Jesus in the air on the Day of the Lord. We all descend to earth, and Christ’s feet touch the Mount of Olives, which then splits in two. The scattered Jews return to Israel. Christ then battles against the surrounding Muslim nations. Scriptures in the Old Testament tell of the destruction of current Muslim nations on the Day of the Lord, and Christ is victorious over His enemies.

**Resurrection and Rapture**

The first event of the Day of the Lord is Jesus leaving heaven and descending toward the earth.

The book of Acts describes how Jesus ascended to heaven forty days after His resurrection. The apostles witnessed this event. An angel tells the apostles that Christ will return in the same way He left. So, we know that Christ will return physically, and all believers will see Him as they rise to meet Him.

The second event of the Day of the Lord is the resurrection of dead believers and rapture of living believers. We see this event mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. Isaiah describes the resurrection of the dead when he writes: “But your dead will live, Lord; their bodies will rise—let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy—your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead” (Isaiah 26:19).

We also see this resurrection of the dead in the book of Daniel. A heavenly man tells Daniel that he would rise at the end of time and receive his inheritance, which, as we will see in the next chapter, occurs in the kingdom of God (Daniel 12:13).

In the New Testament, apostle Paul gives us more specific information on this glorious event. Not only will the dead be resurrected, but those who are alive at His appearance—who for the last seven years have experienced unimaginable trauma and martyrdom—will be “caught up” (raptured) as well, in a transcendent and ecstatic event in the clouds. It is what believers long for; they will receive their immortal bodies and be with Christ forever:

For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17)

So, we see here that Jesus will leave heaven, and the dead will rise first, followed immediately by the rapture of those living on earth. These two groups will meet Christ in the clouds.

We also see Jesus describing this event as His angels gather the elect: “And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other” (Matthew 24:31).

Paul instructs the Corinthians about this “mystery,” stating that it occurs at the last trumpet, as discussed in chapter 4. This last trumpet is the seventh trumpet of Revelation, which describes the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdom of Christ. The perishable will become imperishable and immortal, and Christians will never die again.

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:50–54)

To inherit the kingdom of God, we must be raised and our bodies changed to be imperishable and immortal. The entire creation has been groaning for this day since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden: “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved” (Romans 8:23b-24a).

**Christ on Earth**

The third event to occur on the Day of the Lord is Christ and believers descending to earth. Christ will set foot on the Mount of Olives, which is just east of Jerusalem, and this mount will split in two, forming a great valley (Zechariah 14:3–4). This Second Coming event is described in Revelation 6:16–17, 11:15–18, and 16:17–19 at the sixth seal, seventh trumpet, and seventh bowl judgment.

Christ’s bride (believers) who have made themselves ready and pure (Revelation 19:7–8), along with those martyred in the Tribulation (Revelation 7:14), are the armies of heaven following Him to execute judgment on the earth and fight against the enemies of Israel (Revelation 19:11–14).

But Christ will not return to earth as the humble lamb like his First Coming but rather as a fiery lion to destroy evil in the world. Jesus will avenge all sin and injustice. The fierce anger of Christ will cause terror in people who reject Him. Their destruction will be imminent. Judgment day will have come: “Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. Because of this, all hands will go limp, every heart will melt with fear. Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame” (Isaiah 13:6–8).

The Lord will slay many as He comes to rain fire on the earth and wicked people: “See, the Lord is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword the Lord will execute judgment on all people, and many will be those slain by the Lord” (Isaiah 66:15–16).

He will purge the earth of sin and sinners with it, those who have not received His grace. Christ will avenge (punish) those who have persecuted and murdered Christians during the Tribulation. The arrogant and haughty as well as the ruthless will meet their demise:

I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless … See, the day of the Lord is coming—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it … See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed on it; the earth will conceal its slain no longer. (Isaiah 13:11, 19:9, 26:21)

Along with Christ, we, “the chosen and faithful followers,” will also war against the Antichrist armies as they come against Jesus: “They [the Antichrist armies] will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers” (Revelation 17:14).

So, all believers, His chosen and faithful followers, and the martyred believers of the Tribulation will join Jesus in the upcoming battle against the Antichrist and his armies.

**Find out about the final war at the end of time between Jesus and the Antichrist in the full version of the book.**

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**13**

**KINGDOM OF GOD**

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.

—Revelation 11:15b

**Introduction**

After the Day of the Lord, the physical kingdom of God will commence with the beginning of the millennium. After the millennium, the final state of the kingdom of God will occur when God will create the new heaven and new earth. At the beginning of the Day of the Lord, the resurrection and Rapture will occur. Christ and Christians will descend to earth and fight the final war against the Antichrist and his armies. The restoration of creation will begin to happen, and Christians will reign with Christ over the earth. God the Father will again physically dwell with the human race after the millennium—as He did in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus Himself talked about the kingdom of God approximately 126 times, according to John Piper, chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary.199 Therefore we must understand what the Bible says about the kingdom of God. Scriptures throughout the New Testament encourage us to tell others about this kingdom. Sadly, few of us comprehend and proclaim the kingdom of God. This chapter will help us understand this vital aspect of our Christian faith.

The gospel includes the good news of eternal life through Christ and the kingdom of God. As with the other apostles, apostle Paul proclaims the kingdom of God (Acts 28:30–31). Along with believers, we see in Revelation an angel preaching the gospel of the kingdom to all (Revelation 14:6). Jesus told us to preach the kingdom of God and said that the end will come after all the world has heard the good news: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

In the first part of this chapter, we will attempt to describe the millennium. The last section will be about the new heaven and new earth (the ultimate kingdom of God). However, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:9 that what God has in store for us will be so wonderful that we can’t even imagine it.

This chapter will discuss the Abrahamic inheritance that we Christians receive in the kingdom of God, as well as Jesus’s reign on earth. We will also cover whether we will know one another in the kingdom, what hell will be like, and the rewards that Christians receive in eternity.

There are two kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness (this world’s system) and the kingdom of light (the kingdom of God, i.e., kingdom of Christ, kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of our Lord and His Messiah). The kingdom of God began in the Garden of Eden after the creation of Adam and Eve. They were made in God’s image and were physically and spiritually perfect. When they disobeyed God and followed Satan’s advice, they handed their authority over to the devil. Satan became the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Satan told Him that he would give Him the kingdoms of this world if only Christ would bow to him because Satan ruled the world (Matthew 4:8).

1John 5:19 says that the whole world lies in Satan’s power and his spirit works in the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2).

One of God’s primary purposes was to transfer us back from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God: “Jesus said, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place’” (John 18:36).

Jesus announced that the initial spiritual phase of the kingdom had come at His First Coming (Mark 1:15, 23–27, 32–34). This means that Christians are spiritually seated with Christ currently (Ephesians 2:6), and this explains this initial phase.

Jesus ushers in the physical phase of the kingdom of God at His Second Coming on the Day of the Lord. The full realization of the kingdom of God will be complete after the millennium with the creation of the new heaven and new earth.

We read about this physical kingdom in the second chapter of Daniel. Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. In his dream, a statue represented other kingdoms that would follow his. “The God of heaven will set up” the final kingdom (Daniel 2:44). This final physical kingdom is the kingdom of God that is coming at the beginning of the millennium.

The establishment of God’s physical kingdom on earth was the expectation of Jews that the Messiah would set up when He arrived and is one reason why they did not accept Christ. But the second time Jesus comes will be when this physical kingdom will commence. This kingdom is from heaven. Many Old Testament passages describe this eternal kingdom, including Psalm 37, Isaiah 40, 62, 65, 66, Daniel 7, Joel 3, and Zechariah 14.

As we saw in chapter 9, the Jews will be highly esteemed in the kingdom. Also, all ethnic groups will be present in the kingdom and saved through Israel’s Messiah, Jesus (Revelation 7:9). “Many nations will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob’” (Micah 4:2).

**Who Receives the Inheritance of the Earth?**

Irenaeus states that in the resurrection (the millennium) the seed of Abraham will inherit the land:

If, then, God promised [Abraham] the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For his seed is the church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord.202

Paul references this seed as being Christ: “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ” (Galatians 3:16).

Find out more about who receives rewards in the kingdom of God and what those rewards will be in the full version.

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**We Will Dwell on Earth and Reign with Christ**

The kingdoms of this world will be eternally taken away from Satan and given to Jesus and His holy people (Christians). All rulers will worship and obey Christ Jesus: “But the court will sit, and [Satan’s] power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him” (Daniel 7:26–27).

Those who followed Jesus will sit on twelve thrones, judging Israel’s twelve tribes (Matthew 19:28). In addition, all of Jesus’s followers will judge the whole world, including the angels, and reign with Christ on earth (1 Corinthians 6:2–3, Revelation 5:10). During our reign, the sun or moon will no longer be our light, but the Lord will be our everlasting light and glory, and the righteous will possess the land with Jesus forever (Isaiah 60:18–21, Revelation 21:22–23).

**The Church Will Rejoice!**

In the kingdom, there will be no more mourning, crying, or pain. There will only be rejoicing: “I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more” (Micah 4:19). There will be an everlasting joy instead of shame and disgrace (Isaiah 61:7). Blind eyes will be opened, hearing restored, and the lame will leap like deer (Isaiah 35:6). Songs of thanksgiving and rejoicing will be heard (Jeremiah 30:19).

Truly impressive is that the Lord Almighty, Christ, will prepare a new celebratory feast. He will *serve* those who have been watching for His return (Luke 12), even as the resurrected Lord! Can you imagine what it will be like at that feast? Today we all have our favorite restaurants, but the Lord’s feast will be number one for eternity, and *He* will be serving *us*! “On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines” (Isaiah 25:6).

In addition to this feast, we will also celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16). This feast historically was one of the three pilgrimage feasts of Israel. It commemorated the forty years that the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. It was a feast of thanksgiving and rejoicing, and Jesus observed it. The priest would call upon the Lord to provide water from heaven, which signifies the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit. At the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus said:

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (John 7:37–39)

Celebrating this feast will remind us that our sustenance comes from God, and the Holy Spirit liberates us from bondage. We will remember the bondage that the Jews endured through and how their redemption points to Christ. We will also be reminded of the bondage that we were in because of sin.

**We Will No Longer Have Fear**

In the kingdom of God, there will be no more war, no more evil; creation will be at peace, and we will live in harmony with one another as the wolf lives with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6–9). There will be no more war or fear (Micah 4:3–4). Instead, there will be fellowship among all (Zechariah 3:10). Death will be no more, and the Lord will wipe away all tears and remove disgrace from all the earth (Isaiah 25:8).

**The Church Will Work**

The millennium will be the beginning of the restoration of all things. Part of humanity’s purpose is to rebuild devastated cities left over by the destruction of the Tribulation: “And I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit” (Amos 9:14).

Not only will there be fruit in the millennium but it will also be in the eternal kingdom. The river that feeds these fruit trees will swarm with fish, and there will be fishermen (Ezekiel 47:10). This points to the sport of fishing in eternity. Get out your fly poles!

**Find out if we will know each other on the new earth and who will receive rewards.**

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**14**

**HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE?**

**Introduction**

As we have journeyed through this book, we have understood that the church will undoubtedly go through the coming Tribulation and experience the attacks of Satan, Antichrist, False Prophet, and their minions. We have studied why it is essential to understand biblical prophecy and what will happen in the future. Now we will look at what the Bible says about preparing for and living in these difficult times. We will cover what the early church believed on the subject and what the Bible teaches. Should we store food, money, guns, gold, etc.? Should we move to the country and hide? Should we fight back?

More important than preparing for the Tribulation in these physical ways is to be ready as a holy and loving people when we see Jesus at His return. At His return, He will glorify Himself in His holy people and will be marveled by all who believe. This chapter gives us the tools that scripture teaches to be holy and loving in the end-time.

If we only have proper prophetic doctrine and it does nothing to change us, it gains us nothing; worse, knowledge can puff up and cause arrogance. If we understand all mysteries and do not love, it profits us not at all (1 Corinthians 13:2). God is more concerned with the character of our hearts than what we do or don’t do. If what we do stems from a pure heart, we will reap the rewards and fare better before and during the Tribulation.

The prophet Ezekiel spoke of watchmen warning people of the Lord’s coming judgment. Those who refuse to act bear their responsibility for not being saved: “Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves” (Ezekiel 33:5).

In the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus instructs believers to be prepared for His Second Coming: “Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him” (Luke 12:35–36).

End-time passages instruct us in our relationship with Jesus and prepare our hearts and lives for the Tribulation and the kingdom of God. Understanding this book, especially this chapter, can be life-changing. We must hear the instructions in this chapter and take them to heart. Otherwise, we will fall into the trap that Christ warns against: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46).

**Find out how to be fully prepared for the Tribulation and Second Coming.**

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**GLOSSARY**

amillennialism: A minority belief that there will be no earthly millennial reign of Christ on earth. The millennium is seen as a symbolic period occurring from the advent of the church to the present day. Most amillennialists believe that we are currently in the millennium through the preaching of Christ and His heavenly reign, which will eventually create a utopia where most people follow Jesus, and then He will return. Amillennialism teaches there will be no Tribulation.

ancestral migration interpretation method: A method of biblical prophetic interpretation that considers people groups present in the area when the prophecy was written and follows those groups to where they migrated through the ages to the present day. This area of the world is seen as where the fulfillment of the prophecy will reside.

Antichrist: According to the Greek, Antichrist means being against and in place of Christ. A final end-time ruler that will be filled with Satan and conquer most of the Middle East and lead many to kill Christians and Jews. He is the first beast of Revelation.

Day of the Lord: Occurs at the end of the Tribulation. It is a single day—the most terrible day of all time—yet also the most glorious—with the return of our Savior. The resurrection, Rapture, and Second Coming occur at the beginning of the Day of the Lord. The Day of the Lord includes the destruction of evil and the setting up of the kingdom of God.

early church: Christians in the first and second centuries.

early church fathers: Any of the authoritative and trustworthy Christian leaders who formulated Christian doctrines in the first and second centuries.

end-time: For this book, the period that Jesus refers to in the gospels, particularly in Matthew 24 of the last generation that will see all His predicted signs coming to pass in their lifetimes. End-time includes the “time of the end” referred to in the book of Daniel.

eschatology: The study of end-time.

False Prophet: Is the second beast of Revelation. The False Prophet causes most people to worship the Antichrist, the first beast, and take his mark. The Antichrist, False Prophet, and Satan are a type of perverted and evil trinity, a dark but pathetic echo of the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hadith: A rendering of the sayings and customs of Muhammad and his companions.

historical geographic interpretation method: A method of prophetic interpretation that considers the geographic area that the prophets referred to at the time of their writings and looks at the names of the countries that will exist at the time of their prophecies’ fulfillment.

historicism: Holds the view that the fulfillment of prophecy found in Revelation has occurred throughout history and continues to do so. It uses symbolism to interpret most prophetic scripture.

kingdom of God: Also called kingdom of Heaven and kingdom of Christ. The kingdom of God began in the spiritual realm when Jesus was on the earth and begins physically in the millennium and final state.

millennium: A thousand-year reign of Christ on earth just before the eternal state and after the Day of the Lord.

mark of the beast: It is described in Revelation as the number 666 and will be on the forehead or right hand. This mark represents those who worship the Antichrist and is the “number of a man.” Six in biblical numerology is just short of perfection. The mark of the beast will be placed on the forehead, representing our will, or placed on the back of the hand, representing our actions.

mid-Tribulation Rapture: Teaches that the Rapture occurs three-and-a-half years into the seven-year Tribulation.

Mishna: This is the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions, known as the Oral Torah. The Mishna categorized the Talmud topically.

postmillennialism: Teaches that the millennial reign of Christ happens before His Second Coming.

premillennialism: Sees the millennial reign of Christ happening after His Second Coming.

post-Tribulation Rapture: The Rapture occurs after the Tribulation.

preterism: (Latin for “the past”) is an eschatological view that interprets most prophecies in the book of Revelation and the Gospels were fulfilled by AD 70 (the fall of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple). Full preterism believes that the Second Coming has already happened and partial preterism does not.

pre-Tribulation Rapture: The Rapture occurs before the Tribulation.

pre-Wrath Rapture: The Rapture happens just before the pouring out of God’s wrath near the end of the Tribulation.

Rapture: The catching up of the living saints in the clouds to meet Jesus at His Second Coming.

resurrection: The rising of dead saints at the Second Coming to meet Christ in the clouds.

Talmud: The Talmud contains the oral traditions of the Pharisees, which Jesus condemned. The Talmud is the main document of Rabbinic Judaism and its primary source of Jewish religious law and theology. The Talmud contains the oral traditions of the Pharisees.

time of the end: As referenced in the book of Daniel, beginning with Iran’s conquest of the Middle East until the Day of the Lord.

Tribulation: A seven-year period at the end of this age just prior to Christ’s Second Coming. It will be the worst time in the history of the world.

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