

Prophetic Terms

By Paul Wilson

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Prophetic Terms

Prophetic Terms: the Fullness of Time

We are living in important times, in days when great changes are taking place throughout the world. It is a time of upheaval, and besides that, the world is on the threshold of even greater events. Many men of the world are perplexed and fearful as to the future. No one can look forward five, ten, or twenty years with any calm. The international waters are troubled, and there are many explosive elements that cause a sober man to fear.

Now in the midst of scenes of confusion, some men prophesy of greater and better times to come. Many have schemes for the improvement and betterment of mankind. Panaceas are offered, tried, and then discarded, but apprehension grows.

Fellow-Christian, this is a time when we should seek to have God's thoughts, and not man's, as to the present evil world and its future. There is only one Book in the whole world that can tell the future, and yet how very few Christians there are who understand much of what it says. Surely God has given us the prophetic word as a lamp in a dark place (2 Pet. 1:19), and we do well to take heed to it.

It would be impossible to give any comprehensive exposition of the prophetic word in these papers, but with the Lord's help we hope to consider some of the expressions and terms used in connection with prophecy. A clearer understanding of these terms should enable the young Christian to have a better outline of prophecy, and thereby to discern the character of the day in which we live. He should then be able to look forward with joyful anticipation to his own blest future, and view the scene around as God views it. To have God's thoughts about the world, and to understand more of what He has decreed regarding it, would tend to give us more calm and peace when we see the tendency to unrest, and to the shaking of everything heretofore considered stable. Then neither the false hopes of the false prophets of our days, who still preach peace, safety, and betterment; nor the cries of the pessimist who sees the undermining of everything solid, will affect us. We shall be able to look beyond the darkness, and enjoy even now the prospect of the things that cannot be moved.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom *which* cannot *be moved*, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Heb. 12:28.

"The Fullness of the Time"

It would be profitable to first consider a term used by God, which causes us to look backward, as it refers to the ushering in of the ground of all our blessing.

“But when *the fullness of the time* was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. 4:4, 5.

The fullness of the *time* (singular) looks back over the four thousand years of man’s history on the earth prior to the birth of Christ. During this time God was testing man in many successive ways. On man’s part all the trials ended in sad and dismal failure. It mattered not in what way man in *the flesh* was tested, he came short and was found wanting.

The whole course of the Old Testament is a tale of failure. Think of the wonderful opportunity Adam and Eve had where all was fresh from the hand of God in the garden, yet they gave their ear to the deceiver and fell. Man in innocence was not proof against sin, when put to the test.

After fallen man was driven out from the presence of God, he soon filled the earth with violence and corruption (see Genesis 4 and 6). Lawlessness was so rampant, that God cleansed the earth with the flood, and made a fresh beginning in Noah and his family. Almost immediately failure came in, in Noah himself, and soon his posterity had “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an *image* made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.” Rom. 1:23. Idolatry, which had not been mentioned before the flood, became the rule.

Then God called Abraham out from among idolaters (Josh. 24:14) to walk with Him. He chose the seed of Abraham for His special people, and gave them every opportunity to serve Him. He treated them without the law and with the law; He gave them the priesthood and it failed; He sent them prophets and He gave them kings; but all is the same sad story of failure. If ever a natural people - man in the flesh - had a chance to bring forth fruit for God, the children of Israel had.

God likens them to a vineyard which He Himself planted, but which never bore fruit for Him who planted it. He looked for fruit, but there was none (Matt. 21:33-41; Psalm 80:8-13; Isa. 5:1-7). In Luke 20, after speaking of the lack of fruit He received from His vineyard, God says, "What shall I do?"

It is as though He had come to an extremity. Every effort and every culture of natural man to bring forth fruit, had proved to be useless; and God asks, "What shall I do?" The decision is reached, and God answers His own question with,

"I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him." Luke 20:13.

And with this verse we come back to Gal. 4:4.

"But when *the fullness of the time* was come, God sent forth His Son." Blessed be God! He concluded that man could not bring forth fruit, and He ceased looking for it. He decided to act in the love and grace of His heart, and send His beloved Son.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and *sent His Son*." 1 John 4:10.

We all know the answer to this expression of God's love. They cried, "Away with Him." They cast Him out!

And God triumphed over their abounding wickedness, and made that blessed One to be an offering and sacrifice for sin. Yes, when man had done his *very worst*, God did His very *best*. What a story of love - divine love! - love that gave the dearest object of His heart for most unlovable objects. He sent His Son to *redeem*. He would bring us to Himself according to His love, but also in keeping with His holy character. His beloved Son must die - must bear our sins - if we were to be saved.

Galatians goes on to tell of being brought to God as “sons” with the Spirit of His Son in our hearts. O the depths of God’s love and wisdom! Well may we look back to the “fullness of the time,” and rejoice that we are not on probation, but if we believe on Him who was delivered for our offenses, we are saved and brought to God as sons.

Prophetic Terms: the Fullness of Times

We have now considered the term, “the fullness of the time,” as being the time when the probation of man ended. God had tried man in every way, so that none could say that anything was left untried or undone. Every trial ended in the failure of man to bring forth fruit for God, and proved all, both Jews and Gentiles, to be under sin. All hope for man had thus ended, unless God would act in pure grace. This God did, for He sent His beloved Son - the dearest Object of His heart - down into this world of sin and sorrow, saying, “Maybe they will reverence my son.”

But when men saw the Son, they rejected Him, and finally cried, “Away with Him.” Both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of His death, but God again abounded over

their wickedness, and brought salvation to men through the sacrificial death of His Son. The offer of a free and full salvation went forth, and today continues to go forth.

Friend, have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Savior? There is no hope and no salvation for you unless you personally accept and acknowledge Him.

From where we stand today we look back to “the fullness of the time,” but we may also look forward to
“The Fullness of Times.”

God has decreed, “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times [plural] He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.” Eph. 1:10.

This looks forward to a time yet future, but not in the distant future, when all things in heaven and earth shall be brought under the Lord Jesus. Although He is now disowned in this world He created, the time is coming apace when all in heaven and in earth shall own His rights, and confess Him as Lord.

During the interval between “the fullness of the time” and “the fullness of times” it might appear that God is indifferent to the dishonor and maltreatment accorded to His Son in this world. God is patiently waiting and beseeching men to be reconciled (2 Cor. 5:20) while He forbears to execute judgment on this world where His Son was murdered. God shall yet avenge the death of His Son, but today is the time of His long-suffering and patience. He has assured us that judgment will fall, and Peter speaks of the delay in these words:

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not

willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Pet. 3:9.

This world today is in the position of a guilty criminal who has been duly tried, then condemned to execution, and is just awaiting the day and hour of execution.

Should any read these lines who are still unsaved, remember that you are a part of this world over which the judgment of God hangs. You are either saved by Christ’s death and precious blood, or you are numbered among His murderers and rejecters who are awaiting certain doom. There can be no neutrality concerning Christ; you are either for Him or against Him. If you have not already accepted Him, accept Him quickly while there is still opportunity, and before the judgment overtakes you.

During the interval we have spoken of, the Lord Jesus sits at God’s right hand waiting until His enemies be made His footstool (Psalm 110:1). During this long period of the non-intervention of God with this condemned world, the gospel goes out, but soon it is going to end. In one place God speaks in His Word of this period as “the mystery of God.” Note what God says:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets... And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.” Rev. 10:7; 11:15.

Yes, Christ shall yet reign and have dominion over all, but He shall first put down all His enemies. He shall visit this world with great and sore judgments, and gather out of His kingdom all things that offend. Then shall be the

“fullness of times,” when all things in heaven and in earth shall be headed up under the Man of God’s counsels.

When God first made man, Adam, He placed him in the garden of Eden and gave him dominion over the earth. He made him Lord of the creation, and even brought the animals to him to have him name them. But Adam gave his ear to the devil’s lie and fell. Ruin, sorrow, misery, and death followed the fall of man. Not only man, but the whole creation suffered because of the fall of its first head. Satan, the deceiver, became usurper of man’s place. He, was even able to offer the kingdoms of the world to the Lord Jesus when He came (Matt. 4), for he said, “They are ‘delivered unto me.’” The Lord Jesus refused to receive them from Satan.

It might have looked as though God’s purpose to place man at the head of this creation had failed, and as far as the first man and his posterity were concerned, it had failed; but God shall yet have all under the Man, the second Man, the last Adam, during the “fullness of times.” What the Lord Jesus refused from Satan, He shall yet have from God. He is going to take the headship of the creation, not only by right, but by redemption, for it had fallen under the power of the enemy through man’s sin. All that had been ruined in the hands of the first Adam, shall be more than made good in the last Adam - the Son of God and Son of man.

The 8th Psalm, and the second chapter of Hebrews both speak of His coming dominion, and His present exaltation at God’s right hand. In Hebrews we read that we do not see all things put under the Lord Jesus yet, but we do see Him crowned with glory and honor.

And during the period of waiting, called the “patience of Jesus Christ,” a bride is being gathered out from among

the Jews and Gentiles to be His joint heirs, and share His glory in that soon-coming day. Fellow-Christian, such is our portion!

Prophetic Terms: Times of the Gentiles

Let us read a verse from the gospel of Luke wherein we find the above term used.

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke 21:24.

The word Gentile is used in Scripture to describe any and all nations who are not Jews. Before the days of Christianity, there were only Jews and Gentiles on earth, but now there is another body known in Scripture as the “church of God,” which is composed of those who are saved from among both Jews and Gentiles. All three are mentioned in one verse,

“Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.” 1 Cor. 10:32.

Before marking out what is meant by the term, the “times of the Gentiles,” we shall have to look at the history of the Jews.

God chose the seed of Abraham for His special people on earth. They were further marked out in Isaac and Jacob; and when God gave to the nations their inheritance on earth, He marked out their bounds “according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. 32:8). They were His special possession on earth among mankind. He gave them His promises, and then His covenants. After redemption, He came down and dwelt in their midst.

God also gave them the land of Canaan for a possession and drove out the inhabitants of that land. He did not, however, drive them out without just and sufficient reason. The seven nations who inhabited that land were only tenants on it, as it all belonged to God. Through their great wickedness, these nations polluted the land wherein they dwelt; and God said to Abraham that He would give his seed the land of Canaan, but not yet, because “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. 15:16). This is a principle with God. He never acts in judgment until there is no other alternative. He waits long in patience, but when iniquity reaches its peak, He must act in judgment.

So when the iniquity of the heathen who occupied the land of Canaan, reached the limit, God gave the land to the children of Israel. He brought them out of Egypt and planted them in the land whereon His eyes were “from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deut. 11:12).

We have not space here to recount the multitude of blessings that were bestowed on the Israelites in their land, but we all know the sad history of failure which followed. While the heathen had polluted the land before, Israel did it afterward. In Psalm 106:38 we read that they polluted the land with blood. They learned the works of the heathen, and worshiped their false gods. In fact, the condition in that land became as bad, or even worse, than it was when inhabited by the heathen whom God displaced because of their wickedness. Note this verse:

“So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.” 2 Chron. 33:9, 10.

Yes, they would not hearken. We read that God sent many messengers to them, but they despised the messengers, and misused His prophets “till there was no remedy.” 2 Chron. 36:14, 16.

If God had not acted then, it would have shown Him to be as careless of His glory as they were. He must act! Their very nearness to God, and place of special favor, did not make them exempt from punishment - No! It increased it. God’s special favors increase our responsibility, as we read of Israel,

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” Amos 3:2.

Finally, after every possible effort on God’s part to recall His earthly people, He sent Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to chastise that guilty nation. Note these words:

“And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god.” Dan. 1:2.

Yes, the Lord gave the children of Judah into the hands of this Gentile monarch. In fact, God gave this king a universal dominion, and withdrew His throne from the earth. Earlier (Josh. 3:11) God was called the “Lord of all the earth”; but in the book of Daniel, He is called the “God of heaven.” Israel who had been called “His people,” are then called “not My people” (Hos. 1:9). This great change that took place when God withdrew His throne from this earth, and turned His earthly people over to Gentile control, marked the beginning of the “times of the Gentiles.” This change took place about the year 606 B.C.

And while a remnant of Judah returned from captivity seventy years later, they only did so under the power and control of the Gentiles, so the “times of the Gentiles” went on, and today still continues.

When our Lord spoke in Luke 21, He said that after His speaking, Jerusalem was to be “trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” This also came to pass about the year 70 A.D. That word “until” does tell us that there will be definite termination of this period. In fact we are getting along down toward the end of this period - how close we do not know. But it will end when Christ the Lord comes out of heaven with His saints to execute judgment on this Christ-rejecting earth.

“The times of the Gentiles” are pictured in Daniel, second chapter, in the image of a man. The last part of this figure of the “man of the earth,” is the feet and toes, which describe the last part and state of Gentile power before the

end of this period of time. Then, as we see in Daniel 2, the Lord shall come out of heaven to execute judgment as the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands”; and He will strike the then-existent part of Gentile dominion (the feet and toes of the image - the revived Roman Empire) in His wrath, and break all things to pieces. After executing judgment, His kingdom will fill the whole earth, and Israel will again be brought into a place of blessing and prominence; but it will be a new Israel - they will have a new heart in that day.

May the Lord give us all to see in what close proximity we are to the very end of this age. May we be looking for our Lord from heaven, and holding the things of earth more lightly.

Prophetic Terms: the Fulness of the Gentiles

There is a period of time spoken of in the epistle to the Romans, which has a very special reference to the days in which we live, as showing that there will be an end to the present period of grace. It is called “the fullness of the Gentiles.”

“I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” Rom. 11:25.

There are several things indicated in this verse and in the whole 11th chapter of Romans:

First, that Israel has been partly blinded in the governmental dealings of God;

Second, that the Gentiles are at present brought into a special place of blessing and favor;

Third, that this present period of Gentile preference is to end, and Israel again become the center of God's ways of blessing on earth.

We might then inquire, How did Israel obtain the special favored place in the past dispensation? We will have to go back into the Old Testament and there see that after the flood, men became idolaters and corrupted themselves in the worship of images, behind which were demons. From this condition God called Abraham (Josh. 24:15; Gen. 12:1-3), and made him promises as to his seed after him. God began in Abraham a line of special promise and blessing on the earth. This special privilege is spoken of figuratively in Romans, as an "olive tree" of which Abraham was the root.

The Israelites were the natural branches of this "olive tree" (see Jer. 11:16).

Before the days of Christianity, it was a distinct advantage to be born a Jew. There were special promises conferred on them. This is well described in the words of Rom. 3:1, 2.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

They had the promises, the covenants, the law, the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, and many other advantages.

The next question that arises is, Why were these favored people blinded and cut off from the olive tree? Their blindness was brought about, first, through their own willful departure from God, and then by God's just

decree, when they rejected every means of recalling them to Himself.

We find that God pronounced the decree of judicial blindness against the Jews back in the days of Isaiah.

“And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” Isa. 6:9, 10.

This sentence was issued against the Israelites over 750 years before the Lord Jesus came into the world. Another question might well be asked. When was this threat of blindness actually carried out? In the answer to this question we are impressed with the wondrous long-suffering of God. God waited long and patiently. He sent prophet after prophet to His erring people, and finally sent His Son, whom they rejected and cast out. Even during the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, His own nation were closing their eyes to the light. In Matthew 13 the Lord made mention of the sentence of blindness pronounced by the prophet Isaiah. It was being partially fulfilled because of their persistent willfulness.

But even then, God lingered in patience over His earthly people; and after the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, He sent them a message of free pardon and salvation through the testimony of the Spirit of God to the finished work of Christ. This is plainly shown in the defense of the martyr Stephen in Acts 7. After Stephen had charged them with the guilt of resisting the Holy Ghost, they stoned him, thus showing their rejection of

God's final offer of mercy before the carrying out of the sentence in full.

The Jews at Jerusalem had thus sealed their own fate. Then as the gospel messengers went about preaching from city to city, they sought out the Jews first. When the Jews rejected the gospel, the blindness descended on them. It seems to have settled down gradually from place to place as they refused the last message of grace. It settled down somewhat in the same manner in which the glory left the temple in Ezekiel - little by little as though loathe to do so. It is fairly easy to trace through the Acts, the progress of the rejection of the gospel by the Jews, and the shift to the Gentiles. We might note some examples:

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46. This was at Antioch in Pisidia. Next notice the same development at Corinth:

"Paul... testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." Acts 18:5, 6.

Finally, we see the Apostle Paul sent to Rome, the great capital city of the empire, the world metropolis, as a prisoner, because of Jewish hatred. When he arrived in Rome he

"Called the chief of the Jews together,...to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets...And when they agreed not among

themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers.” Paul then quotes the sentence from Isaiah 6 as applying to the case, ending with,

“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” Acts 28:26-28.

Here, almost 800 years after its pronouncement, the sentence is fulfilled. Thus the gospel to the “Jew first” was closed, and the Gentiles became the center of God’s special favor upon the earth. They were brought into this through Israel’s fall. They were grafted into the “olive tree” on earth. It is a distinct advantage today to be born a Gentile. Yes, the Gentiles now have “much every way.”

But in Romans 11 God speaks, through the apostles, to the Gentiles. It is a solemn word of warning which He gives there. He says that if they do not continue in God’s goodness, they shall be cut off from the olive tree as Israel was; and then if the Gentiles are cut off, Israel shall be grafted in again.

We must remember that in all this it does not speak of a Christian who fails, being cut off, nor of a Christian being cut off at all. It is not “eternal life” in question, but the special favor of God to people on earth. The Gentiles now have this favor, and not the Jews. The Gentiles have the “salvation of God” preached to them freely, but as God suggests, Have they continued in His goodness? Has Christendom continued in the “faith once delivered to the saints”? NO! NO! NO! The answer is visible on every hand. Infidelity, modernism, evolution, false doctrines, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God! What a sad story and

what gross ingratitude to God's salvation prepared at such a great cost!

Reader, if you are not truly saved, be warned. The Lord Jesus is coming to take the real Christians home soon - very soon, now - and then the "fullness of the Gentiles will be come in"; that is, will be completed. The door of grace to the Gentiles will close and the mere professors be left behind for judicial blindness that "they all might be damned who believed not the truth" (2 Thess. 2:12).

Such is the certain doom of fast decaying Christendom.

Prophetic Terms: Christ's First Advent

The Old Testament scriptures abound with prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah.

In Mic. 5:2 it was foretold that this coming “ruler in Israel” should be born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah. The eternity of His being was also mentioned in the same verse.

Isa. 7:14 said that He was to be born of a virgin and His name called Immanuel.

Then in Isaiah 9, His deity was announced, and it was said that He should have the throne of David.

That He should come through the family of David was definitely prophesied in Isaiah 11 and Psalm 132.

The approximate time of His first appearance was even indicated in Daniel 9.

Many other references might be made to the promises and prophecies concerning Him, but space will not permit. Enough has been quoted to prove the existence of precise information, given by God, whereby His Anointed could and should have been expected, and discovered when He came.

But, how was it? Was the world or even the nation of Israel looking for Him? And when He came, did His earthly people rejoice that He had come? No, no, no. Although coming through the royal line of David, He was an outcast from the beginning. People of wealth and social prominence occupied the inn, but there was no room for Him. He was placed in a manger.

The Jews made their boast of having the Scriptures entrusted to them, and these were read every Sabbath day in their synagogues; but, except for a little handful, none were expecting their Messiah. His birth was almost unnoticed, and an aged woman (Anna the prophetess) could speak of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

When Herod the King heard of His birth, he called all the chief priests and scribes of the Jews together for information about this coming King. These leaders could quote from the prophet Micah as to the place of His birth, which proved that they were conversant with the letter of Scripture; but they did not make one move to see Him. Their hearts were far from Him. Sad, sad state indeed!

Prophetic Terms: Christ's Second Coming

Now the Lord Jesus has been gone back to heaven almost two thousand years, but before He went away He definitely promised,

“If I go ...I will come again” (John 14:3).

Just as surely as His first advent was foretold, so His coming again is promised in words unmistakably clear. The One who has gone back to heaven will soon come again. He did not say, I will send an angel to bring you to Myself, but

“I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

Now many dear Christians have read these words supposing that they mean death is coming for them, or

that Christ will come for them at their death. But that is very careless reading. He Himself is coming for us. Death has not gone away, nor is it coming again. And when a child of God falls asleep in Jesus, he has gone to be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23). He has gone to Christ; Christ has not come for him.

The early Christians were living in the constant expectation of the Lord's return. This was a real hope connected with their salvation. The saints at Thessalonica

"Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10).

The whole character of this dispensation should be one of constant expectancy. Christians should be followers of a rejected Christ, living in view of His return. When this hope ceased to animate the Church, it fell into worldliness. Christians settled down to be at home on earth when they ceased looking for their Lord from heaven. There is nothing that so separates one in heart from all that is here, as the expectation of hearing that shout and being caught up to be with the Lord. If you and I knew definitely that the Lord would come tomorrow, it would make the things here seem insignificant, and we would be seeking to be found pleasing to Him when He comes.

The Thessalonians became troubled because some of their number died before the Lord came, supposing that they had lost something. To correct this fear the Apostle Paul wrote the details as to the Lord's coming.

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with

them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

He has promised, and will come to call all the redeemed to Himself. At His coming for all the saved, He will not come all the way to the earth, but shout that shout in the air, calling all who died in faith from their graves. Immediately after this, all who are living and believe (John 11:26) will be caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord in the air. In 1 Corinthians 15 we learn that all this will happen "in the twinkling of an eye." Our bodies of humiliation will be fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:21).

We do not know of one thing that must take place before the Lord comes. He may come and call all the redeemed from their graves, and catch away all the saved ones who are living on earth, before this paper goes to print. There is nothing that must be fulfilled first, and none can give a reason why He may not come today.

Dear fellow-Christian, are we really looking for Him who died for us? Do we long to see Him? I do not ask, Do we accept the doctrine of the Lord's coming? The Jews knew the doctrine of His first coming, but were not looking for Him. May we not be merely believing in the "Lord's coming," but actually expecting Himself. The unbelieving world shall not see Him when He comes to call us into the air to meet Him. Later, when He comes visibly to the earth, we shall come with Him. Then He shall come to execute judgment before He sets up His earthly kingdom and reigns, but the object of this paper is to set before us our proper hope - His coming for His own. May this stir our affections, and not merely increase our knowledge.

Prophetic Terms: the Apostasy

There is much prophecy concerning this earth that must yet be fulfilled; and each prophecy relating to the future will come to pass to the smallest detail, just as did those prophecies concerning ancient cities and governments. We should not, however, try to force Scripture and fit the happenings of today into prophecy. Those who are real children of God may see some shadows of future events, but it is not given to us to look for developments of future prophecy. Everything will unfold with lightning rapidity after the Church is gone from the scene, but our special portion is to wait and watch for the Lord Himself. He is surely coming soon to call all His redeemed to meet Him in the air.

What then will be the condition on this earth following the departure of every true Christian? The answer to this question should probably be divided into two parts: that which concerns the great lifeless Christian profession left behind, and the condition of the Jewish people. The taking of every real Christian from the earth will not remove the profession of Christianity. In fact, it appears that there will be more show and pretension than ever before, by a dead, empty, and corrupt Christendom. There may be a temporary upset when the Christians suddenly disappear, but the devil will be ready with a lie to calm any fears of those who are left behind. The empty shell will take new life from amalgamation and soon boast of greatness. It will truly become "Babylon the Great."

Much evil is tolerated and condoned within the pale of the professing church now; then it will "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:2). Such is the description of the fearful state of that which began in simplicity and truth on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Those who dream of Christianity spreading throughout the world and converting it, so as to eventually establish a sort of millennium on earth, are being sadly disillusioned even now. What a glorious day it will be for the saved, when the Lord calls them home at His coming! What a terrible beginning and awful end for what is left behind! Christendom bereft of those who are real, will readily accept Satan's delusions.

The "gospel of the grace of God" will cease when the Lord comes for His own, regardless of a certain continuation of profession. The gospel door that has stood open for almost two thousand years, will suddenly close at the coming of

the Lord. Those who have heard the message of grace and put off the acceptance of the Lord Jesus, will awake with consternation when it is too late.

Reader, on which side of that door would you be, if it were to close right now?

There is a false teaching abroad, that says there will be another chance for those who wait too long, and find themselves left behind. Some, probably well-meaning people, say that those on the outside will have a chance to accept the “gospel of the kingdom.” But what does Scripture say? Read the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. It certainly offers no encouragement to such an idea. There were five foolish virgins and they represent millions in this and other countries, who are nominally called Christians, but they have not had any personal dealing with God about their sins. They have not accepted the Lord Jesus as their own Savior. They know of the “oil,” but have never possessed it. They have never “bought” it. Buying suggests more than a knowledge of a thing; it implies a closing of a transaction so that it becomes one’s own. After the “foolish” find themselves left behind, they will seek admittance, only to hear those awful irrevocable words, “I know you not.”

O reader, if still unsaved, do not longer trifle with God’s offer of mercy, or put your trust in any false hope of another chance, which will only land you in hell.

“Now is the day of salvation” - it is not promised tomorrow.

Then there is still a worse description of the condition of Christendom in 2 Thessalonians. As bad as “Babylon the Great” will become, a more shocking and debasing iniquity will quickly follow. The working of this error is already present, but it is yet restrained and will be until

the Spirit of God leaves the world with the Church; then wickedness will increase very rapidly. At that time a certain wicked person will come on the scene "with all power and signs and lying wonders." There will be a "strong delusion" sent by God "that they should believe a lie." And why? Because they would not receive "the truth, that they might be saved." Think what an awful thing it will be for rejecters of Christ to be given over by God to believe a lie. What folly to think that one can refuse Christ now, and stand a chance of doing better when all the powers of darkness are turned loose against him!

This consummation of wickedness is spoken of as "a falling away," but more correctly, The Apostasy, in 2 Thess. 2:3. The attempt to overthrow even the name of God, and the substitution of the worship of man and Satan, will precede the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. How comforting to the child of God to know that he shall first be called up to be with and like Christ!

The Apostasy of the Jews will also reach its climax at the same time. They too will go into gross idolatry. The unclean spirit of idolatry, which so long afflicted the Jews, had gone out of them when the Lord was on earth. Idolatry is not mentioned as one of their sins after their return from the Babylonian captivity. But the Lord Jesus foretold that the time will come when the wicked spirit of idolatry, with seven other wicked spirits, will return to them, and their last state will be worse than the first (Matt. 12:42-45).

The same wicked man who will deceive apostate Christendom, will also deceive the Jews. He will show them great signs and wonders, even to the bringing fire down from heaven. He will place an idol, the image of the great political leader, in their rebuilt temple in Jerusalem,

and compel the worship of this man, and accept homage himself. He is the one whom the Lord Jesus said will come in his own name, and him they will receive (John 5:43). He is called the “king” in the latter part of Daniel 11, and also in Isaiah 30 and 57. He is the second beast - the “beast” with “two horns like a lamb” - of Revelation 13. Figuratively he will have horns like a lamb to deceive as an imitation of Christ - God’s Lamb. But his voice will betray him, for he will speak as a dragon. Satan is directly behind this “false prophet” and “antichrist.” His deception will be so strong that if it could be possible, it will even deceive the “very elect” Jews (Matt. 24:24). The mass of the Jews still apostatize, but God will have an elect remnant among them who will suffer persecutions, many unto death, for their faithfulness.

The wickedness of man (both Jew and Gentile) reached terrible depths when they cast out God’s Son when He came into the world in grace. Still God abounded in grace over their culminating sin, and sent forth the gospel of His grace to the Jew first, and then to the rest, beseeching them to be reconciled. When this grace is being wantonly refused on every hand, is it any wonder that God should finally give man up? No, the wonder is that He should bear with such wickedness and ingratitude this long. The explanation of this strange, lingering forbearance of God is found in 2 Pet. 3:9.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Prophetic Terms: the Great Tribulation

The time during which the apostasy will develop will be one of trial and trouble for the earth. The moment the Church is taken to heaven to be with Christ, God's plans for the earth will open. At present He is waiting in patience for men to be saved; then He will visit the earth with judgments of increasing intensity.

It is well to be thoroughly clear that no true believer in Christ will be left here during this time of tribulation. The book of Revelation gives many details as to the unfolding of the judgments that will fall on the earth; but in it, the Church is not seen on earth after the end of chapter three. It is seen in heaven in the symbol of the "elders" who display divine intelligence as to that which happens. There, as

another has said, “They sing the sweetest songs in heaven; they worship more frequently and characteristically than any others. In them combine exalted position on thrones, active office as priests, as well as prophetic intelligence.”

While the Church is still viewed on earth in the third chapter, there is a promise made to the overcomer that he will be kept from the “hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” It is not that they are to be preserved through temptation (tribulation), but they are to be kept from the “hour” of it. They will be gone first, like Enoch, who went to heaven without dying, before the flood came. The whole world will feel the awfulness of that time, but Palestine and the apostate Jews, and the apostate Christian (so-called) nations will reap special vengeance.

When the Lamb in heaven takes the book of judgment to open its seven seals (chapter 5), the “elders” are seen seated on thrones.

Chapter 6 describes the opening of the first six seals, which are in the nature of providential judgments of God. It is God moving behind the scenes bringing forth horses and riders to fulfill His will.

The 7th chapter is a parenthesis in which a special remnant of Israel is sealed - faithful to God, they will be sealed for preservation. A countless number of Gentiles also will come out of “the great tribulation.” The latter will be those who not having heard and refused the “*gospel* of the *grace* of God,” will in that future time believe in God, and await the coming of Christ as King.

Chapter 8 resumes the unloosing of judgments as the seven trumpets begin to sound when the seventh seal is

opened. The severity of the trials increases as the time progresses.

Read carefully Matthew 24:3-14. In these verses the Lord Jesus revealed the course of trouble right down to His return to reign. It is needful to see that in this portion it is the revelation of the coming tribulation *as it will concern the Jews*. Much confusion has been caused by applying this portion of the Lord's discourse on the mount of Olives to Christians or to our time. The disciples in Matthew 24 represent the faithful Jewish remnant who will suffer great persecutions. They will live in days of unparalleled trouble and also suffer from their own brethren who accept the antichrist. Their troubles will be from without and from within.

The disciples ask, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" This word "world" should have been translated "age," and the context shows that the world does not then come to an end, although a period of God's dealing with man will end. In answer to their question, the Lord informs them of general troubles to come, which He calls, "the beginning of sorrows." These earlier troubles correspond to the early judgments mentioned in the book of Revelation. The latter troubles are described in verse 21: "For then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."

While the whole period is often spoken of as "the great tribulation," this term, strictly speaking, only applies to the last half of it. The first part is only the "beginning of sorrows." The "great tribulation" will be the worst time

of trouble the world will ever see. It will be a comparably short time, but will be exceeding fierce and hot. Both parts together will probably not be more than seven years. This is a very small space of time compared with God's other dealings with men; for instance, it is almost 2000 years that the gospel has gone forth.

The 24th chapter of Matthew supposes the Jews to be back in Palestine, and indeed some are already there. They will rebuild the temple and re-establish Jewish ritual. But very suddenly, at the middle of the seven years, their sacrifices and religious services will be stopped, and an idol will be set up in the temple - in the "holy place." At this point their apostasy becomes final, and ushers in that terrible "great tribulation" of short duration. The presence of the idol - image of the great head of western powers - in their temple will be the direct sign for any godly Jews to *flee* from Jerusalem. When that happens, they are to flee in such haste, that if they are in the field, they are not even to go into the house to get their clothes; desolations are at the very door.

Matthew 24 should not be confused with Luke 21. In the latter the Lord gave instructions for the early Christians to leave Jerusalem before it was destroyed by Titus in the year 70 A.D. At that time the signal to leave, was the presence of the Roman armies around the city. The Christians heeded the Lord's words, and were spared the awful slaughter when Jerusalem fell.

Daniel the prophet also foretold of the days to come. In chapter 12 he described the tribulation as a time of trouble such as never was before. This is the same time of which the Lord spoke, for there cannot be two such times, both of which are the worst. Let us notice the 11th verse: "And

from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

The word “abomination” in Scripture plainly refers to an idol or to idolatry. Here we learn that it will not only be the signal for godly Jews to flee, it will be the point from which they can count time. The worst days of trouble will start at that point. Terrible as they will be, they are measured, and will only run their allotted time. Twelve hundred and ninety days is just three and one half years, plus an extra thirty days, (Jewish reckoning of time figures thirty days to each month.)

The idol is called the “abomination that maketh *desolate*” because that for this, God will send a strong one to scourge them. The same days are numbered in Revelation 11 as forty-two months, and 1260 days, either of which is three and one half years. Forty-two months are given in Revelation 13 as the time when the great head of the united western nations will defy and blaspheme God. He will be aided by Satan (called the dragon), and the antichrist described as a beast with two lamb-like horns).

The mass of the Jews who are then back in their land, with the antichrist as their leader, will make a league with the united western powers for their protection. Nevertheless, it will fail, for God will send a power from the north of Palestine as a desolator to scourge them. Listen to what God has said by Isaiah:

“Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for

we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: . . . The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it” (Isa. 28:14-19).

The prophet Jeremiah calls it “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7).

And now, dear fellow Christian, be assured that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” Soon we shall be off from this wicked world to be with our precious Saviour. We shall not be here during the time which we have been considering. God has spoken to us about it, as He would to friends. He has let us into the secrets of what is coming. It is with us as with Abraham; he did not dwell in Sodom, but God told him what was to happen to Sodom.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Rom. 11:33).

(To be continued)

Prophetic Terms: the Day of the Lord

In this paper we come to the subject of the “day of the Lord” which will follow the days of “apostasy” and “great tribulation.” The troubles of the “great tribulation” will be terrible, and will end with the Lord coming personally to execute judgment. He will come to cleanse this world by taking vengeance on them that know not God, preparatory to setting up His kingdom on earth. Some have confused the “day of the Lord” with His coming for His saints, but this should not be done. When He comes to usher in the “day of the Lord,” His saints will come with Him. When He appears in glory, they will appear with Him (see Jude 14, 15, and Col. 3:4). Previously (that is, before the “apostasy” and the “great tribulation”), He will have come and called

His redeemed from the earth and the tomb, according to 1 Thessalonians 4.

Both the Old and New Testaments speak of the “day of the Lord” as a time of judgment and darkness for the earth. Let us notice some of the verses from the Old Testament:

“The day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness ... For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:1-11.)

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch ... Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.” (Mal. 4:1-5.)

“The day of the LORD ... is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm.” (Zeph. 1:14-16.)

“The day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low ... And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.” (Isa. 2:12-19.)

Many other verses of the Old Testament also tell of the time when the Lord Himself shall come to judge the earth. At that time His enemies, called in Acts 2 His foes, shall be made His footstool. What a serious thing it is to be an enemy of Christ! Since the death of the Lord Jesus at

the hand of man, there can be no neutrality with regard to Him; one is either on the Lord's side - for Christ - or against Him. Reader, are you a friend or a foe?

In the New Testament the Lord Himself foretold His coming in judgment. The words of Matt. 24:27-30 are plain:

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be ... Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul had to instruct these young Christians in the truth of the Lord's coming to take His saints away from the earth before the judgment. These newly saved ones were distressed because some of their number had died before the Lord came, so the Spirit of God sent this word to them, explaining how the dead in Christ shall be raised, and the living believers caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This will not be at the “day of the Lord,” but will take place some time before it. Then in the 5th chapter of this epistle, they are informed of the “day of the Lord” that will be subsequent on the Lord's coming for His own.

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”

From this verse we learn that even in the midst of all the troubles of the “great tribulation,” men will be working on plans for world improvement, and for the insurance of

peace to a ravaged world. They will become quite confident of the success of their plans, and will prophesy “Peace and safety” only to find their hopes dashed to pieces by the coming of the Son of man to execute judgment on His enemies. God will be left out of their plans, and their destruction will be swift and sudden.

What a contrast the “day of the Lord” will be to man’s day of the present! Even now man’s will is paramount, and God is left out. In that day, with all the Christians gone from the world, it will have become utterly godless and apostate. But the day will come when Christ, once rejected here, will return with His saints to execute judgment. He is despised and rejected now, but the day will come when all must own His rightful sway.

After Paul had written his first letter to these young Christians at Thessalonica, they became further troubled. This time their trouble was concerning the “day of the Lord.” They had been passing through troubles as a result of their testimony for Christ. They were suffering persecutions, and were tempted into believing that the reason they were having so much trouble was that they were passing through the “day of the Lord.” This was not true, and Paul wrote his second letter to correct the error. In the second chapter he says:

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and [the word “by” is in italics and does not belong here] our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, not by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ [most translators render it “Lord” here instead of “Christ”] is at hand” (or more correctly, “is present”).

He beseeches them not to be worried by this false report, and calls to their remembrance “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and...our gathering together unto Him.” This is to precede the “day of the Lord.” They had been instructed in Paul’s first letter about how the Lord will come in the clouds and call the saints to meet Him in the air. This hope should be their comfort and stay. The fictitious report said that the “great and dreadful day of the Lord” had actually come - that it was already present, not merely that it was at hand or imminent. This threw them into consternation (remember it bore the forged name of the Apostle to accredit it) for they understood that the “day of the Lord” was to be a terrible time. They no doubt knew some of the Old Testament prophecies which we have just noticed, so we can well understand their troubled state on hearing such a report.

After reminding them of the coming of the Lord as their own hope, the Apostle Paul goes on to explain that the “day of the Lord” cannot come until after certain other things take place. The “apostasy” and the revelation of the “man of sin” must precede the coming of the Lord to execute judgment. Surely He will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel. His coming in judgment, bringing in the “day of the Lord,” is a certainty; but no Christian should be troubled by it, for he will be gone from the scene first to be with Christ, and will come back with Christ in that day.

We might borrow an illustration from another. Suppose a certain city in revolt against their rightful king. The king then gathers an army together to go and punish the rebels. But there are some there who are still loyal to their king, and to them the king sends word that he will first come to

a designated place outside of the city and call all those who are loyal to meet him there. He says further, that not one shot shall be fired before they are called out of the doomed city. They are not then to be troubled by false reports that he has already come and the destruction begun, but to calmly await his call to meet him. He also promises his faithful ones that when he does go to execute vengeance they shall accompany him.

The second epistle of Peter also speaks of the coming of the “day of the Lord” as a thief. A thief comes without warning and never for good, so the “day of the Lord” shall come on the godless world very unexpectedly for judgment.

Peter, speaking by the Spirit of God, goes further and tells of events that will take place even after the thousand-year peaceful reign of Christ. He speaks of the dissolution of the present earth and heavens at the close of the “day of the Lord.” Thus we see that the “day of the Lord” will usher in the reign of Christ on earth and continue throughout and even beyond it, to the ushering in of the “day of God” - the eternal state, with new heavens and new earth.

Prophetic Terms: the Millennium

When the Lord Jesus as the Son of man returns in flaming fire taking vengeance on His enemies, He will be preparing the earth for the wonderful time often spoken of as the Millennium. Many have mistakenly thought that the gospel of the grace of God is to first spread throughout the world and so prepare the way for Christ to come and reign. But on the contrary, the gospel is being despised and corrupted, and soon the real Christians will be taken from the world to be with Christ in the Father's house. Then judgments of increasing severity followed by the coming of the Warrior-King will cleanse the earth before His rightful reign. Judgment, and not the gospel, will prepare the way for the Millennium.

The word “Millennium” is not found in the Holy Scriptures, but has been coined from two Latin words to designate a period of “one thousand years.” While the word is not there, the thing itself is very definitely found in many parts of the Bible. The Old Testament abounds with references to the wonderful reign of Christ and its effects on the world, the nations, and the children of Israel. The Lord Jesus also referred to it in the gospels, and when we come to the book of Revelation we find the “thousand years” spoken of six times in the first seven verses of chapter twenty. The Old Testament does not disclose the duration of the time, but the book of Revelation does.

We also get many types in the Old Testament which point on to Christ as King. To mention only two, David and Solomon, we see in them types of Christ coming in judgment and then reigning in peace. David was the rejected, though crowned, king, just as Christ is now. Then the day came when he ascended the throne, and his reign was characterized by war. In his days the enemies of Israel were subdued; and then Solomon, after establishing the kingdom on righteous principles, reigned without “adversary nor evil occurrent.” The one is a type of Christ putting down His enemies, and the other of Christ reigning in peace and righteousness afterward. Of course we must remember that these are only types, and the best of men break down as types. What a breakdown there was in Solomon, as a type of Christ reigning in wisdom and righteousness! But the more the types fall short, so much the more will Christ the blessed Antitype stand out in bold relief. Solomon when at his best in his beginning displayed unusual wisdom, but it was only after the sight of his eyes and the hearing of his ears; but of Christ we read,

“He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears” (Isa. 11:3). He will know all fully.

If the Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed by the display of earthly glory found in Solomon, the type of Christ, what will the saved of the nations feel when Christ really reigns! If the shadow was so great, what will the substance be!

In the transfiguration scene (Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:27-36) there is a sample of Christ's coming kingdom. Peter refers to it in 2 Pet. 1:16-18, saying that they were eyewitnesses of His majesty. It was the coming kingdom displayed in miniature. There was the Lord transfigured before them.

There were also Moses and Elijah who typify the heavenly saints - Moses a type of those who die, and Elijah of those who go to heaven without dying. Peter, James, and John represent the earthly saints in natural bodies. Thus in the kingdom the heavenly and earthly will be brought close together, with Christ the Object for all.

In the Millennium the curse pronounced on the earth in Genesis 3 shall have been removed. Thorns and briers will not be present as now, for we read that “instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree” (Isa. 55:13). Everything will then be wondrously fertile. The crops will be so great that the plowman will overtake the reaper (Amos 9:13). Psalms 65 and 72 also describe the fullness that will be brought forth by the earth in that time. The seasons are to remain, but all will be ordered for blessing, except where there is disobedience among the nations. Zechariah 14 foretells the withholding of rain to any nation that does not go up to keep the feast of tabernacles at Jerusalem.

Even the animals will benefit from the beneficent reign of Christ. At present they are subject to suffering by reason of the fall. They were made subject to vanity through the fall of creation's head - Adam (Rom. 8:19-22). During the Millennium they will be delivered from such bondage, and according to Isaiah 11 and 65, enmity among them will cease to exist.

The Jews who are now hated and despised in many, many places throughout the world, and forbidden from entering their own land, shall be brought back. Those who are apostate and receive the antichrist, will meet their doom when Christ returns in judgment. Afterward the faithful few who were hunted and chased, together with the scattered all over the earth will be brought back by the Lord. It is written in Matt. 24:31,

"He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

So great will be the national regathering of Israel that they will then not refer to the Lord as having brought them out of the land of Egypt, but as having led them out of the "north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them" (Jer. 23:3-8). Both Judah and the ten tribes will be brought back to dwell as one in the land. Their blessing will be as "life from the dead" (Rom. 11:15), and as the resurrection of the "dry bones" of Ezekiel 37. These scriptures, and also Isa. 26:19, do not speak of the resurrection of the body, but of the national resuscitation of Israel for millennial blessing.

Israel can then sing as in Psalm 48, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion,... the city of the great King." The magnificence of the city of

Jerusalem will surpass anything that the world has ever seen. Many scriptures foretell the future prominence and blessing of Jerusalem and the land of Israel. From Zechariah 14 we gather that there will be certain physical changes in the vicinity.

Who on earth can describe the horrible sufferings of the Jews since the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70? What recompense for those fateful words, "His blood be on us and on our children." But while "He hath smitten" so it will be said, "He will bind us up" (Hos. 6:1). When the "King of glory" appears, then the words of the poet will be accomplished:

*"Those gloomy years have rolled away,
The years of Israel's mourning;
The rising sun with healing ray
Proclaims the King's returning."*

As for the Gentile nations, they also will be blessed. Those who are left of the Gentiles after the days of judgment, will be brought into the Millennium, and be blessed as they own Israel's King. At present the nations are seeking means of securing peace, but there can be no lasting peace yet. Before such peace can come to this troubled world, an even worse time is due. Instead of peace, the prophet Joel tells us:

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men...Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." (Joel 3:9-17.)

But in the Millennium it shall be fulfilled:

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation

shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Isa. 2:4. The business of learning war - scientific research and the like - is to go on and increase for the present, but when Christ reigns, they shall not learn war any more. Lord, how long till then?

But what of the Church - the true Christians of this day - during the wondrous reign of Christ? (Read Rev. 21:9 through 22:5.) In these verses see something of the displayed heavenly glory of the Church in that period. Of course the language is figurative, but withal it is a beautiful description of magnificence and glory. She is seen descending out of heaven, and displayed over the earth. Thus the heavenly saints will reign with Christ (canopy over the earth) in that day. They are to be associated with Him in His reigning - not to be reigned over, as wonderful as that will be for the earth. The saved of the nations are to walk in the light of that heavenly city, of which the Lamb is the light.

Satan, the devil and arch deceiver, is to be bound in the bottomless pit, or the abyss, during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3).

“Thou art coming, mighty Savior,
`King of kings,’ Thy written name;
Thou art coming, royal Savior!
Coming for Thy promised reign.
“O the joy, when sin’s confusion
Ends beneath Thy righteous sway;
O the peace, when all delusion
At Thy presence dies away.”

Prophetic Terms: the Millennium

In the last issue we considered the term “Millennium,” and noticed that it is a word used to designate the wonderful one-thousand-year reign of Christ. During that time all the earth will be blessed; the repentant and renewed Israel will be especially blessed under their true Messiah. The nations also will enjoy peace and tranquility under the righteous rule of the King that shall reign in righteousness. The seductions of Satan will not tempt men in that day, for Satan will be confined in the bottomless pit, or abyss. But before that glorious time can come, the Lord Jesus will return as the Son of man to execute judgment. His redeemed will soon be taken from the earth to heaven, and will be with Him when He comes to take vengeance

on His enemies, and on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.

Only those Israelites that are born again will enter into the kingdom on earth. The rebels and apostates among them will be purged out and will not see that glorious time. The seed of Jacob will never again turn aside after that, for it is written:

“The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the LORD; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever.” Isa. 59:20, 21.

But among the saved Gentile nations, there will later be those who will submit themselves because of fear, without true repentance or new birth. It is said of some of them that they will yield feigned obedience. It is written in Psalm 18:44:

“As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto Me.” The margin in some Bibles says, “yield feigned obedience,” instead of, “submit themselves.” (See also marginal reading of Psalm 66:3 and 81:15.)

Therefore, while evil will be restrained and the influence of the devil removed, there will be rebellion and sin among the Gentiles. This will be put down promptly, as we gather from another psalm, which speaks of how the kingdom will be restored.

“Every morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land” (Psalm 101:8; J.N.D. Trans.). Another part of Scripture may be referred to in this connection.

“There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old: but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.” Isa. 65:20.

There will not be sin and death on every hand as now. Death will be the exception rather than the rule. Men will live out their days then, which they have never yet done, because of sin. Even Methuselah who lived to be 969 years old did not live as long as the Millennium. One entering the Millennium from among the righteous will continue on through and live longer than Methuselah. One who dies for his sin at the age of 100 years will be considered only a youth or child, much as we now consider a person seven years old in relation to the present span of life. He who dies then will be a sinner and be suffering the wages of his sin - “the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.”

There is a mistaken idea that all sin now is the result of Satan’s seductions. Such an idea tends to deceive people into blaming Satan for all sin, and excusing themselves, but the truth is that man himself is also bad. Man has an evil nature which of course is easily acted upon by the devil. There are lusts in his heart which are easily stirred to action. During the blessed and glorious time of Christ’s reign on earth, when evil will be immediately put down and Satan be confined, there will be proof that man is bad. Even under such favorable circumstances there will be sin. with the resultant death.

Then there is to be still another proof of the evil nature of man. For after he has experienced a time of freedom from war, fear, want, and all other troubles, and enjoyed a time of blessing such as the earth since the days of Adam's fall has never seen, many will rise up in open rebellion against the kingdom of Christ. Let us notice the prophetic Word as to this rebellion.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Rev. 20:7-9. In the third verse of the same chapter it was said that after Satan is bound for the thousand years, he "must be loosed a little season."

During that long period of prosperity and blessing - one thousand years - there will be a great increase in the population of the earth, whereas it had been much depopulated by the terrible judgments before the Millennium began. Millions will be born and not be tested by evil in those years. The test will come in the

Little Season

at the close of the Millennium, when Satan is loosed. The thousand-year confinement will not have changed that deceiver. He will immediately show himself as the enemy of God, and seduce many of the nations to make one last rebellious outbreak against magnificent goodness. Such is Satan and such is the heart of man that will respond to his suggestion.

The term, Gog and Magog, used of the vast multitude that will rise up in open rebellion, is not to be confused with a similar expression found in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In Ezekiel it refers to Russia and her allied hordes from the north who will come against Israel just as the Millennium begins. They will be destroyed on the mountains of Israel. The scene in Revelation takes place at the close of the Millennium, or one thousand years later than the one in Ezekiel. In Revelation the countless number come from the four quarters of the earth, while in Ezekiel they come only from the north. The judgments also differ, for in Revelation it says that "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." This judgment, similar to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, is very different from being slain on the mountains of Israel.

When we think of the enmity that there is in the heart of man toward his Creator, we who are saved can praise God that our hearts have been won. We who were enemies have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Man's natural thought is that God is his enemy who must be appeased with a present, but the truth is that all the enmity is on man's part. God is not and never was man's enemy. When man first fell in the garden, enmity was implanted in his heart to his Creator. While man's sin has separated him from God, God has been seeking man. He even sent His Son into the world to reconcile it, but men killed the Reconciler. But even now God is beseeching lost men to be reconciled to Himself. Every one who knows the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior believes that God is love. This love has been demonstrated in the gift of the dearest object of His heart - "God so loved - that He gave His only begotten Son."

Such love has melted the heart of the believer and, whereas he was once the enemy of God, now he loves God.

Reader, is this true of you? If it is not, may the love of God melt your heart now.

Prophetic Terms: the Eternal State

While the Old Testament speaks at great length about the coming Millennial kingdom of Christ, and there are some references to it in the New Testament, very little is said in the New Testament about the eternal state - the new heavens and new earth - and it is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Some verses from the Old Testament are quoted in the New, and there they are applied to the eternal state, but the Old Testament does not go beyond the Millennium.

The Millennium will be a glorious time for the present earth, and it will last for one thousand years; yet it will finally come to its close. We have before noticed that at its close, the heart of man at enmity toward God will again be

demonstrated even after such abundant goodness. The fire from God out of heaven will consume the rebels.

The devil who again deceives men after his short liberation from confinement in the bottomless pit, or abyss, will then be cast into the “lake of fire and brimstone.” This is his final disposition. When he is cast into that awful place, it is said that the beast (that head of a revived Roman Empire) and the false prophet (the antichrist) are still there. They had been cast in there one thousand years before, at the coming of Christ to reign. Although they are in the lake of fire for one thousand years, they are not annihilated. There they and the devil together are to remain, and to be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). Man’s wish is parent to his thought of annihilation, but it is foreign to the Word of God.

There is an eternity of punishment for the beast, false prophet, and the devil (and for all who die in their sins), according to the word of Him who “cannot lie.”

Some have thought and written that the devil is a king in hell, but the Scripture depicts him as being tormented there day and night. May we have God’s thought and not man’s.

The wicked dead who had not been raised when the Lord gave the shout that called the bodies of those saints who have died in Christ, from their graves over one thousand years before, will then be raised. Man may speak of one general resurrection at the last day, but they do not get it from the Word of God. Many scriptures teach that there are two resurrections - one to life and the other to judgment. Soon the Lord shall give that quickening shout, and the bodies of those who died in faith shall be raised, but the unbelievers of all ages shall remain in their graves

until the time we are writing of - after the Millennium and at the beginning of the eternal. state.

The dead, great and small, are to stand before God at the Great White Throne to be judged. They are to be judged "according to their works" out of the books. Man hopes that God will forget his wicked deeds, but they are all recorded, and the evidence will be produced in that day. The "book of life" will also be there to prove that their names were never written in it. The evidence will be conclusive and their doom eternal.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15. Yes, the eternal state of the lost is to be in the "lake of fire." It is described variously as: eternal fire (Jude 7); everlasting punishment

(Matt. 25:46); the worm that never dies (Mark 9:44); everlasting destruction (2 Thess. 1:9); blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13); and many other such expressions. Why should men try hard to prove that his existence is not eternal when God says it is? He will either spend eternity with God in bliss, or be tormented with the devil and his angels.

O, the madness and folly of man who will not accept the truth, and take God's salvation which assures him of an eternity of happiness in the presence of God! May the reader make sure that he is one of the redeemed who shall enjoy eternal life in the presence of God. There is no salvation apart from the acceptance of the work of Christ on the cross. One must know the Lord Jesus as his personal substitute before a holy God.

Immediately after describing the final judgment of the unsaved and their consignment to the lake of fire, the Word of God goes on to the eternal state of bliss.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” Rev. 21:1.

In 2 Peter 3 we read that we “look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” Previously it said that the present earth and surrounding heavens are to be dissolved and melt with fervent heat.

How or where God will sustain the earthly saints at the close of the Millennium when the present earth is dissolved, He has not told us. Let it suffice us to know that He can and will. He will then make the earth over - entirely new. From the statement that there will then be “no more sea,” it would appear that many changes will take place. Most of the earth’s surface is now covered with water, and that is necessary to life as it is at present, but then all will be new. Life will be suited to the new condition, whatever it may be.

We are told that righteousness will dwell in that eternal state where sin can never come. At present, righteousness is only preached or offered - we may suffer for righteousness now. In the Millennium, righteousness will reign, and put down wickedness; but in God’s new heaven and new earth it will dwell. That will be the stable and permanent condition. No breath of sin will ever defile that new scene. Then will be seen the complete fulfillment of John 1:29.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

At present we who believe know our sins put away. In the Millennium there will be a further demonstration of

the value of the work of the Lamb of God, but in that eternal bliss we shall see sin completely put away from God's creation.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Rev. 21:1-8 gives us the most complete description of the eternal state. The Apostle Paul only approaches it in 1 Cor. 15:24-28, where he speaks of Christ bringing all into subjection and then delivering up the kingdom which He ruled as man. Then God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - shall be all in all. This coincides with Rev. 21:3; the tabernacle of God will be with men. There will be no more nations or divided languages, and God Himself shall be with redeemed men in that eternal state.

When Adam was in innocence in the garden of Eden, God visited him, but He did not dwell with man in that state. With redeemed men in the eternal state He will dwell.

In that eternal day "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." O the glory of that fixed state of bliss! It is truly worthy of God.

And what of the Church, the bride of Christ, in that eternal blessedness? In the preview of the eternal state she is seen as the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." She still has her beauty as in the day of her espousal. She is still seen as "a bride." How soon a bride today loses her bridal beauty; but O fellow believer, we shall never lose it as the bride of Christ. After one thousand years the Church will still have the same bridal beauty in heaven. If we but laid hold of these things a little more in

our hearts, we would see very little beauty in all here below. May the thoughts of Christ and His coming glory, and ours with Him, so lift our poor hearts above this weary world that we shall live in the atmosphere of heaven.

Prophetic Terms: the Judgment Seat of Christ

In previous issues we have passed down along the line of time from the beginning of the “times of the Gentiles,” about 606 B.C., all the way to the eternal state - the “new heavens and new earth.” Now with the Lord’s help we shall go back and notice some points that were either omitted or passed over with only brief mention.

Previously we considered our blessed hope - the expectation of soon hearing that shout in the air and being caught up, with all the redeemed, to meet our Lord in the air. That blessed moment is now nearer by some months than it was then. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” After considering the Lord’s coming for His own, we followed future development of things on the

earth, but now let us turn our thoughts to heaven and the “judgment seat of Christ.”

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Cor. 5:10.

“For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ [God; J.N.D. Trans.] ... So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom. 14:10-12.)

The language is plain and conclusive. All must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ. Man is a responsible creature and must give account to his Creator of everything he does. Not everyone, however, will be manifested at the same time or place. Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed (John 5:22, 27), will “judge the quick [living] and the dead” (2 Tim. 4:1), but not at the same time, nor will believers be manifested before Him together with unbelievers.

The scene in which saved ones are to be manifested will be in heaven (2 Cor. 5:10).

The living nations are to be judged on earth (Matt. 25:31-46), when He comes to reign.

The wicked dead are to be raised to stand before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15), at the close of the Millennium.

Many people have erroneously thought that there will be only one judgment seat, and that all people, saved and unsaved, will in a final judgment day stand before the bar of justice. Such error is often connected with the equally false idea that then and only then will people know who are saved and who are not. Now the Word of God does not teach that there will be a general judgment, but, on

the contrary, carefully differentiates between the various judgments.

At the judgment seat of Christ in heaven only believers are to stand, and they are not to be there to find out whether they are saved or not. That will have been settled long before. Nor are they to be there to be judged, but rather to be “manifested,” that is, to have all their works brought in review. Now this does not in the least contradict that blessed verse, John 5:24.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment]; but is passed from death unto life.”

The believer in Christ shall never come into judgment. For him, the judgment for his sins is passed and gone. His blessed Substitute bore his sins and the judgment due to them, on the cross.

We can stand on the sure Word of God regarding the believer’s perfect security before God. Yet it is also true that everyone who is saved is going to have every act done in the body brought out in the light before Him who will judge righteously.

We need also to remember then when the Lord comes for the believers, we shall all be changed. We shall receive bodies of glory, so that when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ we shall be “like Him.” What judgment could there be for those who are already glorified and brought there by the Lord Himself who came to get us?

A beloved brother in Christ, now with the Lord, used to say: “It is like a family where all the children have been away to college. At last, summer comes and all the children come home for a happy reunion. Each one is welcomed

home and all enjoy the father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and home; but after a few days the father of the family calls the children one by one to bring out their reports so they can go over the results of their work, to see how they spent their time when away at school. All is then gone over to receive the father's approval or disapproval."

When the Lord calls His own, not one shall be left behind. What a glorious and happy gathering that will be - to be with our Lord and all the redeemed in our Father's house! Are we then going to dread the manifestation that will follow shortly afterward? No, we shall not dread it; we shall desire it. Then all will be brought out in the light and we shall want it so. There will be no flesh in us then. We shall see all as Christ sees it. No hidden motive will warp our judgment in that day. At present hidden motives, almost unknown to ourselves, cast a strange light on what we do. Then, everything will be perfectly transparent. Blessed be God! He does give now the privilege of getting into His presence and judging ourselves there. Even though that is only feebly and partially done by us, we do know something of the happiness of having things out before God. "Blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:2).

May we seek to be more in a state of openness and transparency before God. And yet, we cannot trust our deceitful hearts, and have to say with the psalmist, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse Thou me from secret faults." Psalm 19:12.

Even the Apostle Paul who sought to keep always a conscience void of offense toward God and man, and could say that he knew nothing against himself (1 Cor. 4:4), that is, he was not conscious of anything wrong, quickly adds that his not knowing of anything that was wrong did not

justify him. The Lord would be his judge. Have we not all proved even in this life that we were mistaken in our judgment of certain things? We have sometimes thought that we were right, only to discover later that we were wrong - influenced perhaps by some secret wish. Shall we not then see many things differently, when we fully understand and see all as God sees it?

When in that bright glory we stand before Him, with every roving thought gone, every earthly influence removed, and all fleshly desires banished, we shall see as never before the exceeding grace of God. As we see what we were in His light, we shall magnify Him who abounded toward us in all wisdom and love. Of course we shall see what we missed by walking "as men" and pleasing ourselves when we were "in the body" on earth. We shall discover what we lost by not being faithful to Him in the days wherein we had opportunity, but all such discoveries will but awaken praise to Him who so faithfully loved and cared for us in spite of what we were.

In that wondrous day we shall understand many things that we do not perceive now. When we see how near falling we were at times, and how He in His grace stepped in and hindered us from taking another step, we shall praise Him and adore Him. Some of the troubles and difficulties in our path will then be understood as His gracious preventatives and restoratives.

Then after the judgment seat of Christ, the Church will be presented to Christ as His bride. It will then be said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19:7.

The making herself ready probably refers to the judgment seat of Christ where every single thing shall be

brought out and forever cleared. The glorious bride will not have the slightest concealed thing to mar her perfect harmony and intimacy with her adorable Bridegroom.

Dear fellow Christian, may we seek to live more transparently before God now - to judge all in His presence - and to live in view of that day when every deed shall be brought out at the judgment seat of Christ. Surely these thoughts are wholesome for us now.

But when the Apostle Paul thought of the judgment, his mind turned to those who were unsaved, and who will have to stand before Christ to be judged. Then the thought of the "terror of the Lord" and the doom of the lost - this led him to warn and to "persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). May we also warn the unsaved to flee from the wrath to come.

Prophetic Terms: Judgment of Living Nations

“Jesus of Nazareth...who went about doing good...whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day...And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick [living] and dead.” Acts 10:38-42.

The very One whom men slew is the One who is to be their Judge. Death is no avenue of escape from meeting Him as the Judge, for He will judge the dead. There is one way, and only one, of escaping judgment at His hands; that is by accepting Him as Savior now. I must either know Him as the blessed One who took my place and died in my stead on Calvary's cross and who bore my sins in His

own body, or some day stand before the bar of justice and hear my doom from His lips. He will be either the sinner's Savior and Substitute, or his Judge.

Reader, do you know Him as your Savior? Happy are you if you do, for then you will never come into judgment. But if you are a stranger to Him in His grace, His judgment must inevitably overtake you some day. He will judge both the living and the dead, but not at the same time.

We who know Him as our Savior await that blessed moment when He will come and take us all Home to be with Himself in the Father's house. And, as we noticed in the last issue, we shall then have all our works brought into review before Him. Then all that has been done just to please self will be loss, and everything done for Him will be rewarded and be gain. This will take place after we are safely in heaven.

As soon as all the Christians are taken from the earth to be with Christ, the world will begin to feel God's judgment which will be poured out on it with increasing fury. During those days of world-wide trouble, wickedness will rise to unprecedented heights, and then shall appear the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven to personally execute vengeance on them that know not God (2 Thess. 1:7-9). When He comes out of heaven, the saints who will have been taken there will come out with Him as the "armies which were in heaven." Then the two leaders in man's consummate wickedness will be taken alive and cast into the lake of fire, and great multitudes will be slain by the sword of Him who is "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Rev. 19:11-21).

After the Lord Jesus, as the Son of man, has cleared away many who will have risen up in rebellion, He will

establish His throne of judgment on the earth to judge the living nations. This judgment session is described in Matt. 25:31-46.

“When the Son of man shall come [or, shall have come] in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.”

It is after He has already come as the lightning striking swift judgment on His enemies, that He will establish the “throne of His glory.” Then all of the living nations on earth are to be judged before His tribunal. It is definitely an earthly scene, for there will be no nations in heaven; and it is not the time of the judgment of the wicked dead, for when they are raised to be judged, nations will have disappeared. Here the ones who will appear before His throne are the Gentile nations alive on the earth at that time. (As for the Jews when He comes, He will deal with them separately.)

The method of discrimination and of judgment at the “throne of His glory” will be unique. It will be exactly suited to the situation and requirements. Both the sheep (saved ones) and the goats (lost ones) will be present at this trial. In this it will differ from the judgment seat of Christ in heaven where the believers are to have their works gone over, for only saved ones will be manifested there. And at the judgment the wicked dead, only the unsaved will appear (Rev. 20:11-15). But here, both classes are to stand to be separated the one from the other - the sheep placed on His right hand and the goats on His left.

The evidence on which those of the nations are to be judged is different also. They will be judged according to the way they treated “His brethren” - the Jewish

messengers - who will have gone throughout the world after the Christians left it, preaching the “gospel of the kingdom.” While most of the Jews will apostatize, and accept antichrist, there will be a faithful remnant who will believe in the coming of the true Messiah; these will go out everywhere telling the good news that He is coming. Their message will be much the same as that preached by John the Baptist before Christ came the first time. At His first coming, Christ was rejected and the coming kingdom was postponed, while Christians were gathered out of the world for heaven. But when the Christians are taken to heaven, then the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 24:14) will be resumed by faithful Jews. These Jewish messengers, called by Christ “My brethren,” will suffer much persecution and many will be martyred. Among the Gentiles, faith in God and the coming King will be evidenced by the manner in which the message and the messengers are treated. It will still be true that “without faith it is impossible to please God.”

It may be needful to remind some that this preaching of the “gospel of the kingdom” is not a second chance for those who now refuse the “gospel of the grace of God.” For those who in these lands refuse Christ as Savior now, God will send a “strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,” for the purpose that they who refuse grace “might be damned” (2 Thess. 2:10-12). But there are millions on earth who have not heard the “gospel of the grace of God.” By far the greater part of mankind on earth are outside of any profession of Christianity. For these, the Jewish messengers will carry the good news of the coming kingdom of Christ. These few faithful Jews will do in probably not more than seven years what Christendom had failed to do in almost

two thousand years; they will preach this gospel in “all the world.” The Gentiles who believe the message will show their interest in its messengers and at the “throne of His glory” will hear “the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Matt. 25:34.

Here the Son of man is called the “King,” and in addressing those on His right hand He calls them “blessed of My Father.” They will not know God in the relationship of their Father, as believers in this age do, but be blessed by His Father. Another mark of difference from that which belongs to Christians is that the kingdom (earthly) was prepared for them “from the foundation of the world.” The believers now were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).

It is beautiful to see how the “King” will credit the “sheep” with having done for Himself personally whatever they did for even “the least” of His messengers; He will so identify Himself with these Jewish “brethren.”

It was a similar lesson that Saul of Tarsus learned on the road to Damascus when he heard the Lord say to him, “Why persecutest thou Me?” That persecutor of Christians had to learn that when he molested them he was persecuting “Jesus” (Acts 9:1-5). And contrariwise those who had despised the messengers of the “King” will be shown to have refused the “King” Himself.

Another point to be noticed is that the “goats” on His left hand - those who refused the messengers bearing the “gospel of the kingdom” - will be sent away into “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (v. 41). The lake of fire was not prepared for men but for the devil and his

angels; and yet, how sad that rebellious men who will not have God's grace are to share it with them.

Prophetic Terms: Great White Throne

There will be a resurrection preceding the judgment of the great white throne. It will be the resurrection to judgment spoken of in John 5:29. The resurrection to life, also spoken of in the same verse, will have taken place 1000 years earlier. There will be two resurrections; all raised in the first resurrection are raised for heavenly blessing and all raised in that last resurrection are raised for judgment.

The first resurrection is “from among the dead,” for all who died unsaved will be left in their graves when the saved are raised. But at length the time will arrive when those who died in unbelief - died unrepentant - shall be raised. It will then be the resurrection “of the dead” not from “among” the dead, for there will be no unraised dead

left when the final resurrection takes place. Then every single human being that died, refusing the testimony that God had given him, will be raised to stand trial.

Before the Millennium begins, the “first resurrection” will be completed and it will be said, “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. 20:5). But after the Millennium has run its course, and the time has come for the dissolution of the present earth (making way for the “new heavens and new earth”), then the rest of the dead shall be raised to stand trial before the great white throne.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God [the throne]; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:11-15.

What a solemn scene is unveiled before us in these verses! A great white throne - that dazzling whiteness of light from the holiness of Him who sits on the throne. On earth men hate the light because their deeds are evil, but there they will be exposed by the exceeding brilliance of His holiness. Nothing can then be hid. It will also be a great throne by reason of the greatness of the Judge - the

Lord Jesus Himself - and by reason of the magnitude of the judgment - not one of the many, many millions who died in their sins escaping.

And then the books are to be opened. Sins long forgotten, sins considered only trivial, and secret sins will all be brought out as evidence when the records will be opened. Every sin is to be called to remembrance, and the dead are to be judged "according to their works." Yes, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing" (Eccles. 12:14). Men may treat sin as a light matter, but God does not. Well may the psalmist say,

"Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." Psalm 143:2.

The only way that any can escape the judgment of God is to be under the shelter of the blood of Christ. John 5:24 shows that by hearing the words of the Lord Jesus and believing God who raised Him from the dead we shall not come into judgment. For every true Christian the judgment is passed; it was borne by his blessed Substitute on the cross. Not one sin remains to be charged to the believer in Christ; not one sin will be overlooked or forgotten when the unsaved stand before the great white throne.

Then the book of life is to be opened to prove that their names were not written therein. God will take care to show His righteousness in passing sentence. Although He has to give account to no one, He will show by the books both the positive (their actual sins) and the negative (their names not being found in the book of life), evidences that they deserve the judgment that is to be passed.

The sea will give up its dead. Think of all that have perished in the seas; not one will be missed. O the folly of men that imagines that death is the last of them. How

much wiser it is to believe God and accept His way of escape from coming wrath. God has faithfully warned that “after death the judgment,” and He has provided a Savior for all who will have Him.

Then death and hell - hades - will deliver up the dead in them. Death, the place of the body, and hades, the confines of the soul, will deliver up their whole contents that all may be judged according to their works - their entire population emptied out to be cast into “the lake of fire.” As there will then be no further use for death and hades, they are said to be cast into the lake of fire. Death, the last enemy, is said to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26).

The lake of fire is called the “second death.” This does not mean the annihilation of the wicked. Scripture bears out the fact that the punishment of the wicked is eternal, just as the blessing of the saved is eternal. In the same chapter (Rev. 20) the devil, the beast (head of the revived Roman Empire) and the false prophet (the antichrist) are to be “tormented day and night forever and ever” in the lake of fire. The beast and the false prophet will have already been there for 1000 years. Many deceivers have written to soothe the fears of men saying that God will annihilate the wicked completely. This most certainly is not true and is only the result of rebellious men’s wish that it might be so.

In Ephesians the unsaved are spoken of as “dead in trespasses and sins.” They are viewed as morally dead toward God - their souls separated morally from Him. Now it is evident that such moral death does not mean annihilation. No, it is man morally away from God and living in sin.

Then there is the case of one who dies physically. Life has gone from his body and he is said to be dead - it is the body without the spirit. But that does not mean that

the man has ceased to exist, or has been annihilated, or is unconscious. Luke 16 shows that even though an unconverted man dies, his soul still lives in hades. That man had conscious existence in the unseen world and was capable of remembering and having remorse even in that state. His body had been buried, but even while awaiting the last resurrection and the judgment of the wicked dead, he was tormented in hades.

Death for the Christian certainly is not ceasing to exist. The thief that got saved on the cross was to be with Christ in paradise, and Paul desired to depart and be with Christ which is far better (Phil. 1:23). Certainly ceasing to exist was not far better than serving the Lord here below, but Paul looked forward to being with Christ when he had left this world and his body had been committed to the grave. So then we see that death in each of these instances does not mean annihilation and neither does it when speaking of the second death - the lake of fire.

Moral death is the separation of the soul of man morally from God.

Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body.

The second death is the separation of the whole man - body, soul, and spirit - from God for all eternity. An eternity of woe.

Reader, if not yet saved, stop and consider your destiny - the lake of fire - if you die unsaved. Do be warned and flee from the wrath to come. And if you die unsaved, the very gospel verses that you have read and perhaps know by heart will rise up to taunt you in that awful, eternal separation from God, the source of all light, in "outer darkness."

Fire is often used to describe God's judgment, and so it is here. It is His holiness punishing sin as it must. But remember that He in love gave His only Son to die in order to save guilty sinners. But how shall any escape if they refuse or neglect so great salvation? Escape for such is impossible, for God must punish sin.

Prophetic Terms: Day of the Lord

The word “day” is often used in Scripture to denote a certain period of time. In a previous article we considered the “day of the Lord” and noticed that it refers to the time when the Lord Jesus will come back to the earth and set everything right, and reign. The world is very sick and, and there is no indication of any betterment at hand. Strife, greed, famine, and troubles of every nature beset the whole world. The very foundations seem to be tottering. This is “man’s day” (see 1 Cor. 1:3; margin) and he has made a great mess of everything. The coming of the Lord to call His own away may take place at any moment. What a happy moment will that be for all who are saved, and how terrible for those unsaved who will be left behind. Then the

things which are troubling the world will become suddenly worse, only to end when the Lord Jesus returns to subdue His enemies and set up His righteous government in the earth - the “day of the Lord.”

The “day of the Lord” will be a great and dreadful day for this Christ-rejecting earth. (See Joel 2:1-11; Mal. 4:1-5; Zeph. 1:14-16.) (It should read in 2 Thess. 2:2, “the day of the Lord” instead of “the day of Christ.”) The whole period of His Millennial reign is included in the term, “the day of the Lord.” It will even include the “little season,” when man has a last test, after the Millennium. Christ must reign until He puts down all enemies and brings everything into subjection, as we noticed in 1 Cor. 15:25, 26.

Day of Christ

There is also the expression, “the day of Christ,” which is previous to “the day of the Lord.” It is found in Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16 and takes one in thought to the heavenly rather than the earthly scene. The Apostle Paul looked forward to the “day of Christ.” He had joy in the Philippian saints as he saw what grace had already wrought in them, and then looked forward to the time when they would be with Christ, and all would be completed in them.

“Always, in every prayer of mine for you all making request with *joy*... Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:4, 6.

After that, he writes about his desire for them that they would abound in knowledge and intelligence so as to approve the things that are excellent to the end that they might walk without a wrong step until that glorious day - the “day of Christ.” Snell should be our desire also. Sad to say we do fail and take wrong steps, but if we were

walking close to the Lord, it would not be so. God has made provision for us if we fail -

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

But the Word of God does not suppose that we must fail. Just think of all the provision that we have in Order to walk pleasing to Him; we have been saved and brought to God in perfect peace; we have the Word of God as a perfect guide-book; we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us for power; and We have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest to succor us when we are weak. Alas, how little we avail ourselves of the resources we have in Christ to walk pleasing to Him! Not that we should ever expect perfection in the flesh. Such ideas are wrong and only tend to exalt self - to confidence in the flesh. We should have no confidence in the flesh, but can we not say that when we do fail, it was our fault and our own lack of watchfulness. That blessed day - the day of Christ - is soon coming. Then all shall be perfect and the work begun in us shall be complete, but let us seek to walk pleasing to Him in view of that day.

The Apostle had labored in the gospel and suffered for it at Philippi (see Acts 16) and these dear saints had been the fruit of his labors. After they were saved they had taken an active interest in the gospel; they had shown their fellowship in it from the first day they were saved. They were willing to share in its trials and conflicts. Then he writes to encourage them to walk blamelessly before the unsaved and to show them the way of salvation:

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse

nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." Phil. 2:14-16.

Paul looked forward to the time when he and all the saints would be with Christ - when he would see the fruit of his labors. The beloved Apostle put this forward as a motive for their going on in faithful testimony. That will be the time when the results and fruit of all our labors will be manifest. We can then look forward with joyful anticipation to the "day of Christ." Our work for the Lord cannot be correctly appraised now, but in that coming day of glory it will be seen in His light. Surely the "day of Christ" presents a different thought than the "day of the Lord" which speaks of subjugation of all on earth to His righteous rule.

Day of God

The "day of God" looks forward to the ushering in of the eternal state.

"Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. 3:12, 13.

The "day of God" will follow the "day of the Lord." The Lord will first bring all into subjection and destroy all enemies. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). Then in that eternal state, God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as God will dwell with men. God has been pleased in past dispensations to reveal Himself according to the need of the time, but then all dispensational

names and revelations will have passed. All dispensations will then be over and “God will dwell with men.”

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Rev. 21:3.

“Nations” will have disappeared, for it is “men” with whom He will dwell. The word “dwell” speaks of a fixed and permanently settled condition. It is also said that righteousness will dwell in that scene of bliss. Every trace of sin will have been removed from God’s creation and never enter it again. All that Christ ruled as man in the “day of the Lord” will be given up to God, that God may be all in all - the day of God, the eternal day.

*“Lord we can see, by faith in Thee,
A prospect bright, unfailing;
Where God shall shine in light divine,
In glory never fading.”*

Prophetic Terms: Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

The prophecy of the “seventy weeks” is a most remarkable one, the proper understanding of which will enable the child of God to have a better grasp of His purposes concerning the earth and His earthly people Israel. While the present time in which God is gathering out of the earth a people for heaven is not mentioned in the prophecy, yet there is a break into which it fits.

It will be well to notice the state of Daniel’s soul and his deep exercises prior to the receiving of this wonderful prophecy. God chose the vessels to whom He would communicate His mind, and He also prepared them beforehand to be suitable instruments for the reception and communication of His truth. A careless or indifferent

person was incapable of knowing the mind of God. He carefully prepared those He would use. Neither is a careless or worldly-minded Christian now in a state to understand the things that are revealed to us by God, for they are revealed unto us “by His Spirit.” If a child of God is going on in a way that the Spirit of God is grieved with his walk, then the Spirit is not free to show him the “things that are freely given to us of God.” May we then, as we approach this prophecy, be before God to judge what is not of Him and seek from Him a “wise and understanding heart.”

Daniel had been born in a day when the “two tribes” were in a sad state. The kings and the people had alike departed from the Lord, and He in His righteous government gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who destroyed the temple and carried many captives to his land. Daniel was one of these captives when he was a very young man. But in spite of all the failure and the terrible darkness of the day, Daniel sought to honor God, and God honored him. The principle is ever true, “them that honor Me I will honor.” Daniel was a man who had a true and honest purpose to please God, and he did not plead any expediency for doing otherwise. Times had changed but he knew that God had not.

Although many direct prophecies were given to Daniel, he did not fail to read the Scriptures for himself. He used the same means that are open to us—he read the Word of God. From the book of Jeremiah (ch. 29:10) he understood that the desolations of Jerusalem, which were then present, would last only seventy years from their beginning. He believed God and therefore he understood that the time was at hand for his people to return to Jerusalem. We have the same opportunity – “through faith we understand.” It

was not by outward observation that Daniel perceived the time was nearing for their return. There may have been nothing on the horizon then to indicate it, but Daniel believed what God said. So we today should understand that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” We should be able to understand that by believing what God has said in His Word and not by observations, although we do see the storm clouds gathering which will break after the Lord has come for us. Our faith should be in God and His Word rather than in the darkening skies. So in this second verse of the ninth chapter we see Daniel not as the prophet but as the devout student of prophecy given through others.

The immediate result of his reading and understanding the time that had been reached was to put Daniel on his face before God in the most earnest prayer and supplication. The fasting, sackcloth, and ashes bespoke the inward state of his soul - that moral state which truly feels the condition of God’s people and identifies itself fully with it in any day of ruin.

Although Daniel was not much more than a boy when he was carried away captive, and although he had sought to live for God in that strange land, yet he confesses the sins of the people as his own. He does not say “they have sinned,” but “we have sinned.” He looked round about and saw the deplorable state they were in and saw it in God’s righteous dealings with them. As one of “Wisdom’s children” he justified God in all His dealings with them and confessed their sin. He, feeling his own part in the failure and confessing it, was in a position to intercede with God on behalf of the people. He pleaded with God for them on the ground of His mercies. Such a spirit of pleading for the people of God is one that is according

to His heart and mind. We see the same spirit in Moses, Samuel, David, and other true servants of God. While God may have to chastise His children according to His government, yet His heart is toward them, and we are never in the current of God's thoughts if it is otherwise with us. Nor can we ever properly separate ourselves from the failure of the Church of God on earth. That which was blest beyond anything else on earth (the Church) has surely failed most grievously. Everything is now in ruins and each one of us who are saved is a part of that failure. If we had a deeper sense of the failure and our part in it, there would be more intercession for the saints of God and also a deeper entering into His thoughts about them.

Daniel was a man given to prayer. It was not something that he did in days of special stress and trial. In the sixth chapter when storms were gathering around his head, "He went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." v. 10.

The man of God is sure to be a man of prayer.

Sometimes Daniel did not receive his answer at once; in the tenth chapter he was kept waiting "three full weeks" for the answer. But in the chapter we are considering the answer is immediate:

"And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplications before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and

talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." Chap. 9:20-22.

So we may sometimes receive answers to our prayers at once or we may be kept waiting for a long time. A delay is not a reason for concluding that our prayer was not heard. God in His wisdom may withhold an answer to deepen our exercise of soul, or it may be for any one of a number of reasons; but we can rest assured that when God withholds or waits to answer our requests it is done in His perfect wisdom of what is best and is withheld according to His true love which wants to do the very best for His own.

Daniel's exercises of soul were concerning his people Israel and their getting back into their own land from Babylon at that time, but God was about to give him a deeper revelation than that which related to their soon-coming return to Jerusalem. God was going to unfold the whole future of Israel to Daniel right down to the time when Israel would be blessed under their Messiah in a day that is yet future. What a signal favor to be thus let into God's secrets and plans! And has not God opened up the future to us? Surely He has! And while all the prophetic unfoldings of His Word do not relate to us (the Church) they should interest us as being part of what God is going to do, and we should desire to know what He has been pleased to reveal to us. It is surely a mark of distinct favor to be told all in advance.

Now we should bear in mind when considering the "seventy weeks" that Daniel's people are in question. Much confusion has resulted from failure to remember this fact. To try to bring either Gentiles or Christians into the picture would only spoil what is clear and understandable. This

is distinctly stated in the 24th verse where the prophesy proper begins:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” Nothing is vague or uncertain here; the special objects of this prophecy to Daniel are Daniel’s people (Israel) and Daniel’s holy city (Jerusalem). Christians are not called Daniel’s people, nor do Christians have a holy city on earth. Nevertheless, we as Christians should be interested in God’s earthly people and in the revelation He has been pleased to make to us. This prophecy is for “our learning” and will most certainly be profitable as we enter into God’s thoughts.

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

Daniel learned from the book of Jeremiah that the captivity of the Jews in Babylon was to last only seventy years. Those years had about rolled away and as Daniel stood on the threshold of their return to their own land, he was led to confess their sin, for which they were sent into captivity, and to pray for their return and blessing. He claimed no merit in themselves but counted on God's mercy. God responded with a wonderful unfolding of a period of time concerning those same people - Daniel's people. This new disclosure covered not merely seventy years, as was their captivity in Babylon, but "seventy weeks." This is evidently a different length of time, but let us inquire what is meant by the word "weeks." In ordinary

language a week is a period of time composed of seven days, but that certainly cannot be the meaning in this passage. Nothing like the things predicted in the prophecy came to pass within seventy actual weeks nor in many times that number of weeks.

In seeking the correct understanding of this prophecy we must first be clear about what the seventy weeks mean. We are told by Hebrew scholars that the word in the original is not literally “weeks” but merely “seventy sevens.” It is a word that described something divided into seven parts. They are really weeks of years; that is, they are seventy periods of seven years. This was quite understandable to Daniel or to any Jew, as they were accustomed to think in terms of “sevens” when dealing with years. We, on the other hand, think of tens and speak of decades, but the Jews thought in terms of sevens. They were to let their land rest every seventh year (Exod. 23:11).

Now, on this basis we can proceed, knowing that “seventy sevens” or 490 years were determined on the Jewish people, in the counsels and purposes of God, to bring certain things to pass. What then is the conclusion of these 490 years to bring in? Let us read in the 24th verse.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.”

Clearly then it has to do, in its final fulfillment, with the cleansing of the Jews from their sins and iniquity and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness - something neither they nor the world has yet seen. We who are saved know that our sins are forgiven in virtue of the death of

the Lord Jesus on the cross, and we know that He is our righteousness; but no one would say that this prophecy is fulfilled yet. It further says that it will “seal up the vision and prophecy” concerning the Jews. Certainly much that has been spoken by God concerning this is yet unfulfilled. And the last statement, “to anoint the Most Holy,” would be understood by any Jew to mean the “holy of holies” in the temple. All of these things remain unaccomplished and can only be expected when the Lord Jesus, as the true Messiah, comes to reign, bringing in the Millennium. Thus we see that all this blessing was to be ushered in at the end of 490 years, and it has not yet come. Let us keep this in mind and then we shall go on to see just how much has already taken place, what remains to be done, and what is causing the delay in final fulfillment.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” v. 25.

In this verse we have the starting point of the “seventy weeks,” or 490 years - “the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” It always makes things easier in studying prophecy when we know with certainty the starting point. In this case it is a certain governmental decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. In the first chapter of the book of Ezra there was a decree issued by Cyrus, king of Persia, to build the temple at Jerusalem, but nothing was said about the city itself. No doubt God ordered it that Cyrus should give the order to rebuild the temple; in fact, God had prophesied about Cyrus, even by name, more

than 100 years before he was born (see Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4). But his decree is not the starting point of our prophecy.

In the seventh chapter of Ezra “Artaxerxes king of Persia” (known in history as Artaxerxes Longimanus) issued another decree, but it also concerned the temple at Jerusalem. It had to do with the carrying of the silver and gold and the vessels to Jerusalem for the house of God. So then neither is this the starting point of our prophecy.

Now let us go to the book of Nehemiah where we will find our starting point for the “seventy weeks.” In chapter 2 the date is given as “the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.” This is the same king that issued the decree of Ezra 7, but in Ezra it was in the seventh year of his reign, and in Nehemiah in the twentieth year. In that year Nehemiah made a request of the king that he would send him into Judah and to the city of his father’s sepulchers - Jerusalem - in order that he might build it. After that, Nehemiah asked for letters so that he could procure the needed materials for the palace and the wall of the city, etc. Then he said that the “king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.” This is very definitely the time referred to in Daniel 9. It is an official governmental order for the building of the city and wall, which according to scholars is in the year 445 B.C. Now bear in mind that Daniel received this vision in the “third year of Cyrus king of Persia,” about 538 B.C. or 93 years before it came to pass. Attention is called to this fact because of the attempt of infidels to prove that Daniel wrote history and not prophecy. They certainly would like to think so because the very marked accuracy of their fulfillment stamps them with the finger of God and

condemns themselves. Daniel certainly was a prophet; the Lord Himself called him that (Matt. 24:15).

From this starting point in 445 B.C. the “seventy weeks” are divided into three parts:

7 weeks or 49 years

62 weeks or 434 years

1 week or 7 years

70 weeks or 490 years

The first 49 years are separated from the others probably because of the special trials suffered by the Jewish remnant during those years in building the wall and the city. For information about the “troubled times” encountered in building the wall, read the book of Nehemiah which is the latest historical record in the Old Testament. God made special note of the hardships of the ones who labored in those days by making a special section of the prophecy for that time - “seven weeks.”

From the end of those first “seven weeks,” or forty-nine years, there were to be “threescore and two weeks,” or 434 years more, “unto the Messiah the Prince.” Here is a definite prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but the prophecy does not state the exact point in His pathway that is referred to. Some able scholars have thought that the 69 weeks go right up to the day when the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the ass. At that time He was formally presented to Israel as their Messiah, and then rejected, and within a few days He was crucified. Some students of chronology have even calculated that from that day mentioned in Nehemiah 2, when the decree to build Jerusalem was given, unto the day the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem as their Messiah was 483 years to the very

day. That may be true. One thing is sure, God's Word will always be fulfilled to the very letter.

O if Jerusalem had only recognized their Messiah when He was presented to them! But they did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). On that day when He was presented to them, there lacked only seven years of the 490 for Him to bring in final blessing, but alas, they said, "Away with Him, crucify Him."

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

The Scriptures had foretold the coming of the Messiah and given many details concerning it. And when He came, He came at the specified time, in the designated place, and in the manner announced; the Word of God must be fulfilled. But they also foretold His rejection and described the hatred and enmity of men, which would go on until He was cast out. One of the prophecies concerning His rejection is brought before us in Daniel 9:

“And after [the] threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself” or, “and shall have nothing.”

Their Messiah was to be cut off and have nothing of the glory and kingdom that belonged to Him. How accurately

this was fulfilled! “He was cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa. 53:8).

When the Lord Jesus was here, His disciples were expecting that He would set up His kingdom and reign. They knew the prophecies concerning the Messiah reigning in His glory on earth, but they completely overlooked those that just as definitely spoke of His rejection and being “cut off” without receiving the glory. Even after the Lord died and rose, they were looking for the glory of the kingdom. On the road to Emmaus with the two disciples, He said to them,

“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” Luke 24:25, 26.

They were willing to believe part of what the prophets had spoken; that is, they were willing to believe in a Messiah coming to reign in glory. The Lord upbraids them for not believing all that had been spoken about Him and then went on to explain that His rejection must come before His glory. The Lord Jesus fulfilled every requirement of prophecy concerning His birth and life, and yet the eyes of the Jews were closed so that they did not discern Him or His glory. They did not know the time of their visitation (Luke 19:44). And lastly they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him.” And when Pilate protested to them because of His innocence, they said, “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matt. 27:25). O what a fateful choice was made that day! There they stood with their Messiah before them on the very threshold of their blessing, but they “cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him.” With 69 out of 70 weeks (483 out of 490 years)

already fulfilled, they crucified the “Lord of glory” and so postponed the blessing.

The last week (the 70th) which will immediately precede and usher in the glorious reign of the Messiah was separated from the other 69 weeks in the prophecy. That there is a break between the 69th and 70th weeks is plainly evident, but there is no indication in Daniel 9 as to how long the break would be. Israel’s rejection of Christ brought an indefinite parenthesis into the ways of God with them.

It is not uncommon in the Old Testament prophecies regarding Israel to deal with the then-near distant events, after which they skip over to the time of the end and foretell the circumstances and happenings incident to the coming of Christ to execute judgment and reign. Christ is the object of prophecy and all prophecy leads to Him. This should be kept in mind by all who would inquire into prophecy. God did not give it to amuse us or to exercise our intellects but to lead us into His purposes concerning His Son. Unless this is seen, the study of prophecy will be cold and unfruitful. Now let us see what is said as to the interval between the 69th and 70th weeks.

“And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” v. 26.

Jerusalem and the temple were to be destroyed in the time after their “Messiah and Prince” was cut off. It does not say just how soon after He was cut off that this would take place, but we know from history that it was about forty years later. The Lord Himself foretold that the murderers were to be destroyed and their city burned up (see Matt. 21:41 and 22:7). The Jews had sought to curry

favor of the Roman government for they feared that the Romans would “take away both their place and nation.” When their Messiah was on trial before Pilate, they said, “We have no king but Caesar.” Nevertheless their city was to be destroyed, and they themselves to be scattered all over the earth, which was but one of the dire consequences of their rejection of Christ and of their saying “His blood be on us, and on our children.” This destruction and the continued desolations were foretold in Luke 21:20-24.

“And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh ... For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

Another point to be noticed in this prophecy, which further emphasizes the accuracy of Scripture, is the designation of who would destroy the city of Jerusalem. It was not the Persians or the Grecians who followed them as a world power but another people designated here as “the people of the prince that shall come.” This we know was the Romans - the very people whose favor they sought and who did take away both their place and nation. It does not say that “the prince that shall come” shall destroy the city but his people, leaving it for still a later date for the appearance of the prince himself. Now this prince plainly could not mean “the Messiah the Prince,” for He was cut off. But some great personage is to come on the scene, at a later date, who is here called the prince. Now if the people who are called his people were clearly the Romans, then this great prince is to be a Roman, but we are not yet down

to verse 27 to consider him. In verse 26 the destruction of the city is prophesied:

“And the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end, war” (J.N.D. Trans.).

But here in Luke 21 the continuous form of trouble for Jerusalem is indicated. And has it not been so? Many Jews have been scattered far and wide, and yet they remain a distinct people. The Moslem Mosque is on the very site of the temple. This then is what fills the gap in the prophecy as far as the Jews are concerned. Of course we know that God has used this interval by the operation of the Holy Spirit to gather out of the earth a people for heaven. It is now, while the Jews are cast off, that the Church is being built. We are living in the day of God's grace to this world. We are living in the day of Gentile privilege and preference. The Jews are judicially blinded because of their rejection of their Messiah; however, a remnant of them believe and become a part of the Church of God, with their portion in heaven and not on the earth.

It would be well for all of us to consider that this parenthesis in the ways of God with the earth has run on for almost 2000 years. This gap will soon run out, and God's ways of grace will change to acts of judgment for this Christ-rejecting earth, for the Gentiles have not continued in God's goodness either. We should be conscious that we are now down at the very end of the interval. In fact it may have closed before this paper goes to press - the Lord may have come.

Reader, are you saved? Have you accepted Christ as your personal Savior? Have you ever been before God about your sins and seen the Lord Jesus dying on the cross for those very sins? If not, remember that your time is running

out. God has lingered all these centuries showing His grace to and forbearance with the world, but He has told us that the day of judgment is soon coming.

We have seen the awful calamities that have befallen the Jews for their rejection of Christ. Do you think that the Gentiles and the empty lifeless profession of Christianity will escape? No, no, no! The only way of escape from the coming wrath is through the blood of Christ. Are you under that shelter? Nothing else will matter.

Prophetic Terms: the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

Verse 26 of Daniel 9 introduces “the prince that shall come.” He is to be the head of a revived Roman Empire. That the Roman Empire is to be revived does not hang on this prophecy alone. Revelation 13 and 17 both speak about this great power of a future day; 17:8 describes it as one that “was” and then ceased to exist - “is not” - and later “shall be present” (J.N.D. Trans.). It was the Roman Empire that destroyed Jerusalem in the days of Titus, about A.D. 70. Later it was broken up, and for centuries it ceased to exist as a unit. But in a day that is near at hand it will come up out of the turmoil of the nations in a new form. It will have ten confederated governments under a central head - described here as the “prince that shall come.”

In Daniel 2 the course of Gentile world powers is described in the vision of the image of a man. The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire of the past, and then, looking on to the end of Gentile dominion over the Jews, the last state of the Roman Empire is depicted in the “ten toes” of the feet. Here again we have ten parts of this future power. There was nothing between the legs and feet, indicating that there would be no universal power between the days of Rome in the past and the Roman Empire of the future. Several have tried to achieve world power but never accomplished it.

Then in Daniel 7 the Roman Empire of the past is described as a “dreadful and terrible” beast; such we know Rome was. Then it pictures the future of the same power in these words: “and it had ten horns.” Everywhere the testimony of Scripture is uniform as to the form of the future Roman Empire. There is also another “little horn” in Daniel 7 which describes this same “prince that shall come.” The little horn comes up and dominates the whole beast. In fact in Revelation 13 this great prince is called “the beast” himself.

This Roman “prince” will make a league with the Jews for a period of seven years. Before this takes place we, Christians, are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. He may come at any moment. After the Church is taken to heaven the ways of God with His earthly people will again begin to unfold. The interrupted “seventy weeks” will be resumed; the last “week” or seven years must be fulfilled. During these seven years the Roman Empire will assume protection of the Jews and give them Palestine as a home land, but still under their Gentile domination. The Arabs (who at present are vigorously protesting the admittance

of more Jews to Palestine) will continue to be the enemies of the Jewish occupation of that land. They will probably perfect what they now seek - a federated Arab state - which is described in Isaiah as the “king of the north”; that is, north of Palestine. Daniel 8 and 11 also go on to develop the picture of this “king of the north” of the future, and Psalm 83 gives the list of his confederate peoples.

For fear of the Arab world the Jews, who will have gone back to Palestine in unbelief seeking a home land rather than their Messiah, will readily turn to the Roman Empire for protection and accept a contract with this “beast” for seven years. He will permit them to re-establish their Jewish ritual and rebuild their temple. This will stir the Arabs to great resentment, but the overwhelming strength of the Roman Empire will apparently guarantee safety to the Jews. Now the 27th verse should read,

“And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.”

Some have misinterpreted this “covenant” to mean the “new covenant” which the Messiah will make with Israel, but that plainly could not be the case for He will not make one for seven years nor will He break it. This is “a covenant” entered into by the Jews and their false Messiah - the antichrist - on the one hand, and the head of the Roman Empire on the other. It is also made with “the many” or the mass of the Jews. There will be a faithful remnant who will refuse this proffered aid and suffer for it, but the many will readily accept it.

This contract is also foretold in Isa. 28:14, 15:

“Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye

have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge [the 'king of the north' or the 'Assyrian'] shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves."

Then the prophet Isaiah goes on to tell that their agreement shall not stand and that the overflowing scourge will tread them down. God will see to it that judgment will overtake them; but He also gives a word of encouragement to the faithful few by telling them of Christ the "sure foundation" for them who trust in Him (v. 16).

After one half of the week - 3 1/2 years - has run its course, this "prince" will break his contract with the Jews to the extent that he will cause all their ritual and sacrifices to cease. As wicked as the Jewish leaders and most of the Jewish people will be, this "prince" will be worse. He will hate even the mention of God and seek to obliterate all acknowledgment of Him in any way. He will substitute total idolatry for their reestablished religious services. The antichrist, the Jewish leader, will be his guilty coadjutor and tool.

That this "prince" will stop the Jews' religious services and institute his own schemes is foretold in Dan. 7:25:

"And he shall ... think to change times and laws [Jewish ritual]; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Here we get the specified time of enforced idolatry as "time" - one year; "times" - two years; "the dividing of time" - one half year; or three and one half years. This corresponds exactly to breaking his league with them and establishing idolatry in the "midst of the week"; that is, after the first 3 1/2 years, and with 3 1/2 years to go.

The Lord Jesus also foretold this terrible and gross idolatry in Matthew 12. The unclean spirit of idolatry had gone out of the Jews after their return from Babylon. They have not been idol worshipers since, but in that day the unclean spirit of idolatry will go back into them, with seven other wicked spirits, and their last state shall be worse than the first. And for this “protection of abominations” (J.N.D. Trans.) there is going to be a desolator. The “king of the north,” whom they fear, will surely be a scourge in God’s hand because of their return to idolatry. Their contract with the Roman prince shall not save them from the devastation which “shall be poured upon the desolate” - the Jews.

The Lord Jesus referred to this idolatry in Matthew 24 as the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel” in the 12th chapter. An idol will be placed in the temple according to Matthew 24 and will be the sign for the godly Jews to flee Jerusalem in great haste. The terrible times called “the great tribulation” will follow the institution of idolatry. It will last 31/2 years and be called “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7). Of course it will be a time of trouble for the whole world also, but there will be special vengeance on the Jews for their return to idolatry and for their acceptance of a false Jew, called the “antichrist.” The 31/2 years are also spoken of as 1260 days in Daniel 12, and in Revelation 13 as 42 months.

Dear fellow-Christian, we stand upon the very threshold of the coming of the Lord and of those awful events which will follow on this earth. We are not looking for the formation of the Roman Empire but rather for the Lord; that is, we should be. Some Christians have put events foremost and have lost in their souls by it. The Lord would have us watching for Himself and not waiting

for some event that may not be seen before we leave this world. Things will happen very rapidly after we are gone. We see the coming events casting their shadows now, but we are not waiting for events. Let us keep in mind our Lord's own words:

“Surely I come quickly.”

And may our response be,

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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