

Life in the 'Last Days'

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Situation Today

How does Almighty God see his earth today?

Very differently from the view of proud man.

He sees all the actions and even the hidden thoughts of every man.

Deception and Falsehood

Shortly before Jesus was crucified, his disciples asked him about 'the last days'. *He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived ... Math 24₄*

Paul warned the early Ephesian church: *After my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert.*

Act 20_{29,30}

Down the centuries since then deception has always been a danger.

Constantine (306-337AD) who was reputed to have converted to Christianity, named the days of the week after Roman gods and began 17 centuries of persecution of the Jews who are God's chosen people by unconditional and eternal covenant (Gen 17_{7,8}). He also introduced the 'sabbath' to the first day (Sunday) when God's command was for it to be on the 7th day to celebrate creation.

By 1370 the Roman Catholic church strongly opposed the translation of the Bible into English by John Wycliffe and declared him a heretic. And nearly 2 centuries later in the Protestant Reformation they considered men like Cranmer, Latimer and Tyndale were heretics. They burned them and many others alive at the stake for translating the Bible into English and teaching simple biblical truths.

Evolution c.f. Creation

The worst deception today is probably the Evolution Theory. This lie began to gain popularity in 1859, when Charles Darwin published the theory in his book 'On the Origin of Species'. This had led adherents to believe that Almighty God did not have any part in the creation of any living organisms. They claim that they all just began and developed by chance over millions of years. Satan is very adept in his ability to make men believe the ridiculous. Consider an Amoeba proteus that is a single cell (~1 mm) and its genome has 290 billion base pairs. It has 12 billion

billion billions atoms. Yes, that is 12 followed by 18 zeros !! Even if all these atoms got together by chance, they would still have to be arranged correctly. And they would still be dead! Who would give them life? Yet the Evolution Theory became so popular that it is now taught as truth in the UK school curriculum! How can intelligent men believe a theory that denies that Almighty God designed and created any of the ~ 9 million creature species and the ~10 million flora and fauna species?

The grave consequences of this folly is that the Bible, which begins "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" and throughout reiterates the wonder of God's creation (at least 59 times) must be considered to be an unreliable myth. So God is assumed to be a fake and can safely be ignored.

Almighty God gives us this vital warning in Ro 1₁₈₋₃₂ (It is quoted here in full):

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

See also www.dickworth.uk/Creation World.htm (Use back arrow to return here)

Wickedness Increasing

We are currently witnessing God's warning being accurately fulfilled. The prophesied rapid world-wide growth in wickedness and violence is the direct consequence of otherwise sensible men believing the evolution lie. God and his Word are carelessly discarded. Deceit and the moral and sexual turmoil in the Western world is rampant. Homosexuality has been legalised. Protest by all manner of extremist groups is ever more difficult to control - especially Islamic groups. Our technical ability to kill is demonstrated in wars throughout the world. Social media and fake news is misused to increase problems rather than solve them. Men are becoming blind to the glory of God. Prov 14¹² The fear of God is rare and the Commands of God are ignored. Truth has been largely displaced by deceit.

The world is also seeing an increased use of Artificial Intelligence by power groups which is worrying. The Internet can be a very useful place to gather information, but it is often used to disseminate evil rather than truth or godliness. It often tries to cover fear with distractions.

Scriptures Propheying Deception

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Gen 3₁₃

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.
Ps 32_{1,2}

No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house. Ps 101₇

Everyone deceives his neighbour, and no one speaks the truth ... Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, declares the Lord. Jer 9_{5,6}

The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. Jer 14₁₄

Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord. Jer 29_{8,9}

Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not exposed your iniquity. Lam 2₁₄

In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. Dan 8₂₃₋₂₅

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Math 7_{15,16}

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many." Math 24_{4,5}

Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" Jn 1₄₇

Jesus said to them ... Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Jn 8₄₂₋₄₄

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness ...
Ro 1_{28,29}

They would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 2 Co 11₁₂₋₁₄

Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ... Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. 2 Thes 2₁₋₄

The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false. 2 Thes 2₉₋₁₁

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons. 1 Tim 4₁

All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Tim 3_{12,13}

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 2 Tim 4_{3,4}

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them. 2 Pe 2₁

Scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ... For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God. 2 Pe 3_{3,5}

I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer. Rev 6_{1,2}

Other Spiritual Battlefield Lies

There are several other common modern deceptions. e.g.

Man induced Global Warming

Palestinian claim to be an ancient nation

Possession of finance is most important for security.

Fake News and false political promises

Man Induced Global Warming

Fact or Fiction?

The problem first gained public concern in the 1980's when it was called 'Global Warming'. In the following years, especially from 2015 - 2023, the global temperature has not followed the 'Hockey stick' increases that were predicted. This raises a key issue concerning the evidence and the assumptions made. Computer models are only as good as the accuracy of the input data and the science of the model's assumptions. True science is fundamentally honest; it is always trying to ascertain the truth. If the ongoing current data does not match the predictions, then 'good science' willingly reviews the assumptions in those predictions. In the Global Warming debate it seems good scientists are rare. Truth and impartiality have often been sacrificed due to politics, finance and personal reputation.

Temperature Measurement problem.

If there was a measurement stations in every square mile of the earth's land mass,
it would need 59 million stations!

Many would be impossible to position, so distribution is uneven.

All would be at varying heights. Temp decreases ~1°F / 300 feet.

Many are in warmer urban areas and each must have consistent shading.

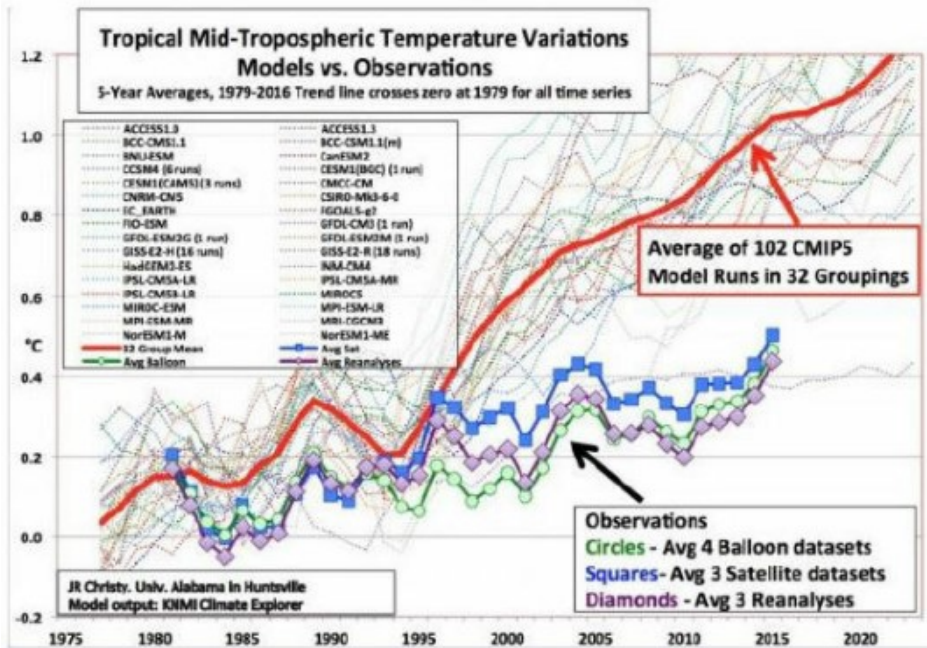
What about the temperature over the oceans that cover 70% of earth's surface?

Since 1980 satellite data has only solved the distribution problem.

But how accurate are satellites ~500 miles above in their polar orbits?

Determining a single current 'world' temperature remains a formidable task. The many agencies get widely different results because of their different averaging assumptions.

Determining the temperature in bygone years requires an even greater raft of assumptions that have to use anything from tree rings to historical crops.

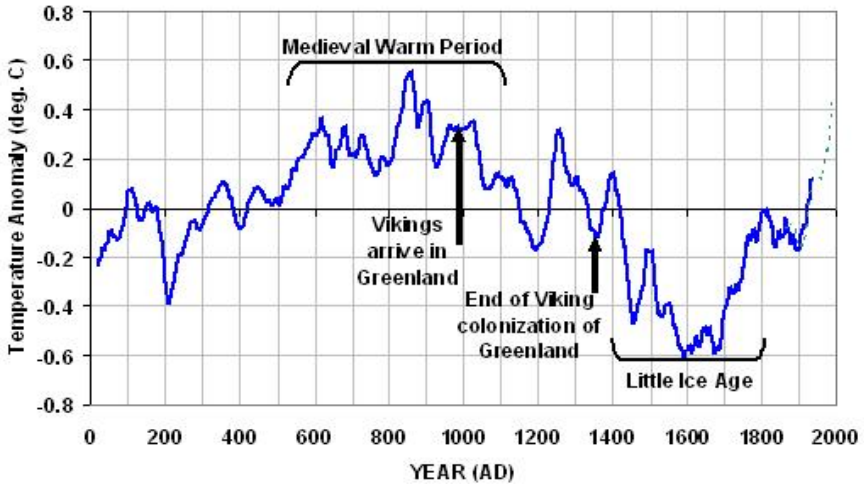


A future 'world' temperature requires even more assumptions and frankly honest guesswork. The graph above reveals these difficulties.

There is not only a wide variation of the temperature of the current years; but there is an even greater range for predictions of future years. The predicted 'Hockey stick' increase did not happen. And thus the claimed 'good science' has proved to be at the very least, unreliable. This should encourage Climatologists to have a greater humility and be willing to admit that at least some of their claimed 'good science' is flawed.

Historical Cycles

The historical cycles of global temperature over the last 2,000 years has obviously been entirely independent of man's use of fossil fuels.



Today's warm period is now similar to the Medieval warm period. There is no doubt that the temperature has risen since 1700 when the Thames ice was thick enough to support Winter Fairs. But the vital question is, has this rise been solely due to increased use of fossil fuel causing increased CO₂ and the 'Greenhouse effect'? The Medieval Warm Period certainly had no such causation. Today's warmth may be partly increased by the 'Greenhouse Effect', but the main reason could well be due to increased solar radiation, as it was 1,000 years ago.

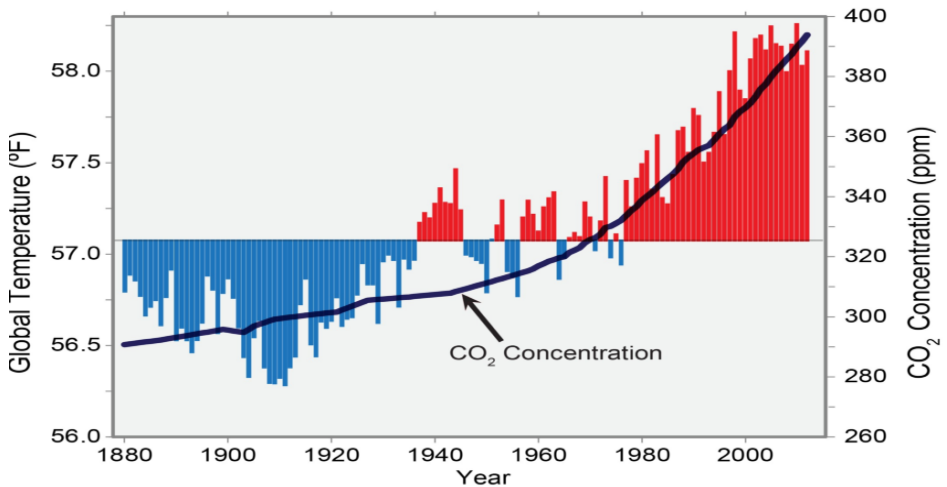
It remains difficult to find an unbiased scientific answer to these questions on the internet.

This next graph of Global Warming was taken from the NOAA website:

<https://www.climate.gov/> Then scroll down to 'Surface Temperature'.

It shows that temperature does not follow the same trend as CO₂. The temperature drops from 1880 to 1910 and from 1940 to 1970 have no correlation with the steadily increasing rise in CO₂.

Global Temperature and Carbon Dioxide



Fear Fossil Fuel and World Resources

The media, including the BBC, seem to delight in broadcasting fear and panic; just as they did when Brexit was being debated. All facts used are highly selected and opinions are plentiful. But simple truth is quite rare.

The unsustainable, greedy abuse of the world's fossil fuels and all its limited mineral resources, plastic pollution, and the considerable western rejection of Almighty God and his Word, especially by replacing creation with evolution, are of far greater concern and consequence than climate change. He will not hold us blameless for our selfishness and the neglect of the poor. He never has and he never will. The only solution is that we call upon the name of the Lord. Let us look forward to the day when *"creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God"* Ro 8₂₁

Conclusion

The fact of global warming since the 'Little Ice Age' in 1750 to today is not contested. But the incorrectly named 'Good Science' claim that this is caused by increased CO₂ is strongly contested because:

1. While there has been an increase in global temperature in the last 270 years, it has not been consistent with the steadily increasing rate at which CO₂ has risen. Especially 1880-1920, 1940-1970 and 2015-2023 when global warming stopped increasing.
2. The vital need to hugely reduce the world use of fossil fuels, especially oil and gas, so that future generations will have sufficient energy to maintain living standards and increase that for the poor. Human selfishness and greed is far more problematic than CO₂. Fusion energy is probably still many years away.
3. Causation. Warming is mostly caused by increased sun's radiation, not by any increased % CO₂
4. 'Net Zero by 2050' has been costed at £130,000 billion. It will probably bankrupt the world without effectively changing the global temperature!
5. In 2023/4 there is 'super-strong' El Nino which has raised the temperature. This is predicted to change to a la Nino in August 2024. What will happen then?

It seems to be a significant deceit that increased CO₂ is the sole cause of global warming.

Palestinian Claim to be an Ancient Nation

Fake History

The Palestinian claim to be the ancient nation who inhabited Palestine is false. Can you name any Palestinian leader before Yassir Arafat? Wikipedia and Britannica do not give any. Why not? Because there weren't any! Arafat founded the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964 to try to destroy the Jewish state of Israel. But before that there were no 'Palestinian' people. There were only Palestinian Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

In 1947 the UN voted to partition the British mandate which gave 30% of the land to the Jews and the remainder to the Arabs (Transjordan). Article 181 only mentions Jews and Arabs. There was no mention of Palestinians because they didn't exist.

In December 1995 Arafat magnified his lie when Israel gave control of Bethlehem to Arafat. He repeatedly said, "Jesus was a Palestinian, Jesus was a Palestinian!" Again the world 'bought' his lie. They had forgotten that even Pilate, the Roman Governor, wrote on the Cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

As the saying goes, "Make a lie big enough and say it often enough and everyone will believe it." This Palestinian lie is a good example.

True History

Since 1004 BC when David captured Jerusalem from the Canaanite Jebusites, it has only ever been the capital city of the Jews. In 135 AD Rome put down the Bar Kochba rebellion by the Jews and to perpetuate their victory with the maximum insult they renamed the land 'Syria Palaestina' (Roman for Philistine).

Since then, Jerusalem has been (re)captured by a succession of Muslims, Crusaders, Moguls, etc and from 1517 to 1917 by Turks (the Ottoman Empire).

The population of Jerusalem (from Wikipedia)

	Jewish	Muslim	Christian
1882	9,000	7,000	5,000
1896	28,112	8,560	8,748
1922	33,971	13,413	14,699

In Nov 1917 the British published the Balfour Declaration. It said. "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people ..." A month later General Allenby defeated the Turks.

After WW1 at San Remo in 1922 the entire League of Nations met and declared: "Whereas recognition has been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country."

This international legal agreement recognised the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine as a pre-existing right, **not a newly-granted gift**. Furthermore this International Law has never been rescinded.

This same conference also formed the 22 new Arab states from Algeria to Oman, including Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt. So the formation of Israel in the 22% of the British Mandate not given to Jordan, has the same international legal status as all the other new Arab states !!

It may be a surprise to many that the 1922 San Remo Agreement was unanimous; the Arabs raised no objections to the Jews returning to their homeland. But this has been largely forgotten.

Once the Arabs had their international status and their boundaries established, they suddenly realised that the remains of the British Mandate not given to Trans-Jordan, was going to be ruled by Jews. So they started rioting. To our shame, the British sided with the oil-rich Arabs and eventually in 1947 the UN passed Article 181 that gave just half the land west of the Jordan river to the Jews, to Israel' and the city of Jerusalem to International Control. Even this was too much for the Arabs, who immediately declared war on the Jewish state. By the gracious hand of Almighty God, who enabled the Jews to fight for their lives, the Jordanians only occupied part of the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem. They were not able to annihilate Israel. Jordan was not considered as being 'Occupiers'.

The UN took over from the League of Nations in 1946 inheriting all their treaties and property. **The San Remo Agreement has never been annulled, only ignored.**

After continued Arab threats war broke out again in 1967. This time Israel managed to expel Jordan from Judea (the West Bank) and Egypt from Sinai - in just 6 days. Since then The Arabs have claimed that Israel is the 'Occupier' of their land - all of

it, from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea.

At Yom Kippur in 1973 the Arabs were again defeated when they made a surprise attack on Israel.

Arafat spent his whole life organising terror and extreme hatred against the Jews. Sadly for both Arabs and Jews, this satanic leader's success by violence only achieved a growth of hatred. Peace and co-operation was never their goal.

1970 Arafat and his terrorists threatened the Jordanian King Hussein who expelled them to Lebanon. (Called 'Black September').

1982 Arafat was forced to flee from Lebanon and went to Tunis.

1993 Arafat signed the Oslo Accords and returned to Israel. But the PA has never kept the Accords. For instance the PLO Charter that calls for the extinction of Israel has never been changed. And any terrorist who murders a Jew is still financially rewarded (or if he is killed the martyr's family is rewarded for life).

The Roman emperor Constantine started persecuting the Jews in 310 AD.

The world, led by Satan, has continued its efforts to exterminate the Jews, who Almighty God has chosen, by pogroms, expulsions, Crusades. It has not ceased today with the PA, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Islam, the EU and even the UN !

God's Covenant with Israel

As the Lord God, the Creator of the whole universe, declares:

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. Ps 24₁

And he exercised his right to give a tiny strip of land, the size of Wales, to Jews.

The Lord appeared to Abraham and said,

"To your offspring I will give this land." Gen 12₇,

The evil world does not like God's choice, and resists it wherever possible.

But there it stands secure and eternal, solid as a rock.

"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." Gen 17_{7,8}

How Will it All End?

War will continue to the end. Dan 9₂₆

All the world will join together and attack the Jews in Jerusalem. But who will win?

"Behold, I am about to make Jerusalem a cup of staggering to all the surrounding peoples. The siege of Jerusalem will also be against Judah. On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples. All who lift it will surely hurt themselves. And all the nations of the earth will gather against it. On that day, declares the LORD, I will strike every horse with panic, and its rider with madness. But for the sake of the house of Judah I will keep my eyes open, when I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah shall say to themselves, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem have strength through the LORD of hosts, their God.' ... And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zech 12₂₋₅

Do the Jews deserve this favour? No! And neither do we Christians.

Nonetheless, God has a gracious plan that will be fulfilled.

The glorious and holy God will establish his eternal and righteous kingdom.

For all those redeemed by Christ, Jews and Gentiles, there will be no more lies, no deceit, no more wickedness and swords will be turned into plough shears.

I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced ... On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. Zech 12₁₀ 13₁

What a day of rejoicing that will be.

"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!

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

Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

Then the angel said to me, "Write: "

Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" "

And he added, "These are the true words of God." Rev 19₆₋₉

See www.dickworth.uk/Whoseland.htm

Finance: a False Security

To maintain wealth or to gain it has commonly been one of man's chief goals. But will it bring the desired happiness or power?

What must often be sacrificed to attain it?

It is said that when one of the Rothschild family was asked how much wealth would take to make him happy, he honestly replied, "More, always a little bit more!"

Jesus asked the question, "What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" We need to consider carefully the story that he told concerning the rich man and Lazarus. (Lu 16₁₉₋₃₁) Our physical life is only a tiny amount of time when compared to eternity.

Greed is a distraction from God's righteousness. Yet modern political policy repeatedly appeals to make us richer, rather than what is clearly right or wrong according to the Word of God. e.g. The UK Brexit debate before the referendum in June 2016 centred not on whether the EU policies or its foundations were right or wrong, but almost entirely on whether individually, or as a nation, we would be better off.

Advertising today is not about just information to guide us where to buy a chisel or a saucepan, but appealing to us to seek peace, pleasure and plenty and to:

- to buy something we do not need, or often cannot afford,
- what we can get cheaper because it is £xxx off,
- get it now 'because you're worth it',
- to impress others, or maybe to attract them ...

But the advert is usually a disguised lie. The item does not do what it implies.

The kitchen blender is advertised as powerful, but omits how strong the cook needs to be to use it. A broker advertises making a 'mint' by buying some shares, but only adds the legal requirement that 'they can go down as well as up', in very small print. Such lying is thought to be 'small beer'.

In 2022 UK firms spent £39 billion on advertising! Such is their seductive power of persuasion that the average personal debt, mostly with bank loans is now (2023) £35,546. So advertising obviously works! This does not include mortgages. The average credit card debt is £1,202.

As the saying goes, "There is no such thing as a free lunch."

There is a major, unpublished problem with national debt. In the world there are only 5 minor countries that still have zero national debt (Macau, Brunei, Liechtenstein ...) Even China's national debt has risen from \$404 billion in 2005 to \$3,750 billion in 2022. The whole world is in debt, but there are no lenders!! The only solution is spiralling inflation. And this is not a solution, but an inevitable consequence. Computerised world digital finance will one day, in God's timing, lead to a total financial collapse. The Lord God has warned us that 'Babylon' will suddenly fall. *'In a single hour your judgement has come'*. But today's economists and the great majority of families carelessly ignore this prophecy in Rev 18₇₋₂₄

In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

"When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

"Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power!

In one hour your doom has come!"

"The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more— cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men ... For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste ..."

"So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; ... for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

Lies have always been costly. At the end deceived men will disregard God's warning. The cost will be sudden and violent, and eternal disaster for all who have not called upon the living Christ for mercy and believed that he was crucified and risen to redeem us.

Our gracious God warns us all clearly,

"Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins." Rev 18₄

He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much;
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan 1628 - 1688

Fake News and False Political Promises

Technology has enabled man to communicate across the whole world so easily. But what is communicated is often not the truth, or at least only part of the truth. And that 'part' is only the bit that the communicator wants us to know about. The 'news' is frequently someone's opinion rather than straight facts. Photos show a small area, chosen to give us what they want it to be a general impression. Reporters interview a selected person, who they know will say what they want us to hear.

It remains a very great challenge to discern the truth.

Opinions are broadcast on Facebook, Twitter etc, often anonymously, so there is little responsibility as to whether what is stated is accurate. What Burke wrote in 1786 is common today: "Falsehood and delusion are allowed in no case whatsoever: But, as in the exercise of all the virtues, there is an economy of truth."

Democratic politicians, who have to rely on votes to keep themselves in power, invariably make promises, which they will later be unable to fulfil, even if when made, they are a sincere hope.

Bishops Plan to Bless Same-sex Relationships

The Church of England General Synod is currently being led by both Archbishops and a majority of the Bishops to introduce the blessing of same-sex marriages. During 'The Rest is Politics' podcast on 20th Oct 2024, Alistair Campbell asked Archbishop Welby "Is gay sex sinful?" He replied, "What the Archbishop of York and I and the Bishops, by a majority, ... have come to say is that all sexual activity should be within a committed relationship, whether it is straight or gay."

But this neatly by-passes the question. If two people have an agreement to burgle a particular house, that it does not make it legal! Almighty God has declared that sex between two adults of the same gender is '*an abomination*'. Lev 18²² 20¹³ Ro 1^{26,27} declares *For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

1 Co 6^{9,10} says: *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 Tim 1⁹⁻¹⁰ and Jude 1⁷ also declare the same verdict.

With this weight of Biblical evidence, how can the Anglican leadership be so deceived? The relationship of the same gender people in no way alters God's condemnation, whatever deceived men seeking popularity in a sinful nation may say. It is bad enough when a government disregards what the Word of God clearly declares, but it is doubly shameful when those in such high office in the Church of England choose to do so. It indicates the depth of deception in their leadership that embraces such '*inclusivity*'. Is it better to try to appeal to the increasingly liberal national culture and maintain church membership, or to love what God loves and hate what God hates.

It is important to see that those who either practice or endorse this immorality will not escape the judgement of the Lord God who said, "*Since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*" Ro 1²⁸ This passage concludes with: *Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.* Ro 1³²

The reason for this deception is mostly due to:

1. As above, the Evolution Theory that has made it an easy, common belief that if Almighty did not create the world, then he can safely be ignored or even insulted. The Western world is rapidly becoming content to live without God.

2. It follows that the 'infallible' word of God can also be ignored or challenged. Or maybe some like to suggest that they keep the parts they agree with, but the rest or the difficult parts that are unpopular can easily be extinguished.

But such folly has a solemn reward: *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.* Rev 22_{18,19}

Truths of Christ That Cannot Be Destroyed

1. Redeemer

To many, God's truth is not acceptable. But he has written:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Ro 3₂₃

The wages of sin is death ... Ro 6₂₃

But he has also provided a way of escape from the just 'death sentence'.

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already. Jn 3₁₆₋₁₈

How did the coming of Christ 2,000 years ago save us?

For our sin to be forgiven a sacrifice to God had to be made.

But this raised a further problem; the sacrifice had to be perfect;

and even the very best I can offer is inevitably tainted.

This problem is not new. It confronted the sons of Adam, Cain and Abel.

Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. ... Gen 4₃ But 'just some of the fruits' were not an acceptable offering, which made Cain 'very angry'.

Abel was a shepherd and gave the very best of his flock. And that was not good enough either. But Abel realised this. *By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice* Heb 11₄. By faith (= *being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* Heb 11₁) Abel looked forward to the day when a perfect sacrifice would be made. He believed God. And God gave him assurance that his sin was forgiven. So, like the sinful woman who anointed Jesus and was forgiven in Lu 7₃₆₋₅₀ who in gratitude gave her best, so did Abel.

Isaiah was also shown the 'perfect sacrifice' - not an animal, not the best gift that any man could give, but a 'Suffering Servant'. Jesus Christ crucified.

He was pierced for our transgressions, ... the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ... He was led like a lamb to the slaughter ... He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken ... Because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many ... Is 53₅₋₁₂

What was the final act of God that enabled the Israelites to escape from their slavery in Egypt? It was the blood of the Passover Lamb that was painted upon the door posts. *When he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.* Exd 12_{23b}

Each year the Jews celebrated the Passover. They remembered the deliverance from Egypt and they also looked forward to the day when the Lamb of God would shed his blood for our sins. John Baptist was shown this truth when he saw Jesus by the Jordan river and declared, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" Jn 1₂₉

From the poem 'Passover Fulfilled' by Paula Worth
Now as we read God's Word we see
From Genesis right through
The promise that a Saviour
The Serpent's head would bruise.
For when the blood is sprinkled
The guilty are made whole,
Granted God's forgiveness, deep peace within the soul.

Now in our own experience
We can enjoy this grace
As at the cross of Jesus
We meet him face to face;
Repentance and forgiveness
And then our new life starts
As now we paint his precious blood on the lintels of our hearts.

The Lamb who was the Redeemer. God's merciful and gracious provision for the complete forgiveness of our sin. The Lamb who bore the death for sin that we deserve, and he did not. The long awaited perfect sacrifice. The One who deserves our constant thankfulness. The only way to receive the promised eternity with him who is *The way, the Truth and the Life*. Jn 14₆

2. Advocate

In a court of law when the accused is brought before the judge, he needs an Advocate to plead on his behalf. What can I say that would help my case? Nothing! The statutory punishment for sin by God's law is death. *But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* 1 Jn 2₁

Is there anything he can say on our behalf when we have to plea 'Guilty'? Our sinless Saviour pleads that he was crucified, a perfect sacrifice to pay for the punishment that I deserve, but cannot pay. The kind assuring voice of the One who knows the whole truth and before whom nothing is hidden, makes this plea on our behalf. In a quiet yet determined voice, our Advocate simply declares that the death penalty has already been served ! He paid it in full some 2,000 years ago. Long before I was even born. And it is accepted.

Furthermore he does not try to proclaim any extenuating circumstances or make any excuses that might persuade the judge towards leniency. He knows that 'Guilty' means death; full-stop. So how can an Advocate help us in this awful predicament? He himself was the Lamb of God who came down from heaven to be crucified. It was all planned and agreed before God designed and created the world. He knew that the freedom given to the pinnacle of his creation would be deceived and disobey. He knew what it would cost him. He knew the truth that he claimed in court that justice had been served and the guilty was to be set free again and live with him in righteousness for all eternity.

Zech 3₁₋₅

The Court of Heaven was duly set,
The Judges took their place,
The prisoner was myself, a son
Of Adam's ruined race.
The Prosecutor read the charge,
The witnesses were sworn,
The evidence was clear and plain;
And there I stood, forlorn.

'I move for sentence,' said the Law,
'My claims must honoured be,
"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"
Has long been claimed by me.'
Then Righteousness a verdict gave,
And Truth concurred as well;
While Retribution hastened near
To drag me down to Hell.

Then, Mercy raised her voice, so soft,
And craved a brief delay
Till Grace, my Advocate, should speak,
Who rose, and thus did say:
'My Lords, I own your judgement just,
And true in every sense,
The Prisoner owns his guilt, and brings,
No plea of self-defence.'

The Judges rose in solemn state;
Declared that I was free,
By virtue of the One who died
For me on Calvary.
And ever since that happy day
It's been my joy to tell
The merits of the Saviour's death
That saved my soul from Hell.

'But in the records of this Court
I find the statement given
That Christ, the Son of God, Most High,
Went down to earth from heaven.
That there he shed his precious blood
For sinners on the Tree,
And in his name, I therefore claim
The prisoner should go free.'

By Lesley Greening,
Secretary of the Slavic and Oriental
Mission in the 1960's.

3. Propitiator

In the vain hope of trying to make the church popular to outsiders, many restrict their preaching to God being only a 'God of Love'. They neglect to teach that he is One who is angered by sin. He truly loves his creation, but he also justly acts with severity against wickedness.

In the old testament man's gross wickedness so displeased Almighty God that he caused a mighty flood that destroyed all except those saved in the Ark that he instructed Noah to build. This judgement is ridiculed or just omitted today.

In the new testament there are two even greater judgements. First when God had to send his willing Son to be crucified on a cross to bear the punishment that we all deserve. And secondly God reveals the Great Tribulation in the book of Revelation, which is God's judgement upon the gross wickedness of the last days. It is a book that is rarely read or understood even in the church.

The truth is that wickedness causes Almighty God to be angry. Propitiation is the appeasement of this just anger.

Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins ... 1 Jn 2_{1,2}

We need to learn the unpopular truth that Jesus Christ is the only one who is able to appease the justified anger of Almighty God.

It has been the common experience of true Christian revivals that sinful men suddenly become aware of the consequence of their sin. So much so that they fall down and cry repeatedly, "God, have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me ..."

In Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* we read how Christian left the city of destruction with a great burden on his back. It was only able to be removed when he walked along the way of salvation and came to the Cross. There he understood the true meaning of the Cross, and his burden fell away. He knew the truth that all his sin was forgiven, that the anger of God was appeased, the Propitiator had triumphed there.

In modern preaching and songs, 'love' is a good and common word, but 'mercy' and our need of it is a rare, neglected truth. Western Christianity is proportionately the poorer for neglecting 'propitiation'.

4. King and Friend

Jesus told his disciples, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Math 20₂₈

This was to counter their human desire for leadership and authority.

Jesus fulfilled this instruction completely.

Now he is risen and is rightly called "*King of kings and Lord of lords.*" Rev 19₁₆

When he came to earth as Saviour, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Jn 12₁₅

Soon he will come as king riding on a white horse! He is called 'Faithful and True'.

And at the end, when he returns, he is seen to judge and make war against the

worlds forces that are attacking Jerusalem. *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on*

his head are many crowns ... Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to

strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron sceptre." He treads the

winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he

has this name written: King of kings and Lord of lords. Rev 19₁₁₋₁₆ (And Zech 12₃₋₅)

On that day his kingship and power will not be in any doubt.

It will mark the visible reality of his righteous and eternal kingdom.

All the redeemed will worship and honour him in his greatness.

He will personally welcome even the smallest and weakest of that company.

No one will ever feel unworthy or left out on the fringes

All the bride will drink freely of *the water of life without price.* Rev 22₁₇

This gracious King will fulfill all our most precious dreams - and far more!

All the present wars, deceit, and wickedness will be forgotten.

He will not be a king who takes and takes and takes ... (1 Sam 8₁₀₋₁₈)

but the One who gives with unimaginable generosity and kindness.

His order and government will far surpass Ezekiel's vision of the wheels and eyes that all moved together with the single purpose of God's Spirit. (Ezek 1₄₋₂₈)

We can be amazed at the sheer dazzling, pure beauty of a sapphire, a ruby, an emerald, or a diamond (even if only in a shop window!), but then in heaven the shared beauty of our king will many times greater.

And all the questions that haunt our minds, the curiosity, the imaginations, the unsolvable problems, the incurable sickness that many suffer ...

The King's answers will flow like a stream in spring that can never disappoint.

What a privilege to be with such a King and Friend for ever.

5. The 'God of Love' will Judge the World

Few sermons today speak about sin, or declare that everyone without exception is born sinful; and especially that *the wages of sin is death!* Ro 6₂₃ This not only means that everyone is under the just sentence of death, but also that no one can redeem himself however hard he may try. Our best resolutions will inevitably fail. Education cannot teach us to always be good. And no one can obey the demanding legislation of the 10 Commandments. As Jesus told the earnest young man "One thing you lack ... " Lu 18₂₂

Many Church leaders desire to be popular rather than truthful. But the purpose of Jesus being born on earth 2,000 years ago was to be the crucified Passover Lamb of God. His plan was to redeem us; to pay the death penalty of our sin, which we cannot pay. How else can Almighty God forgive us? The Cross was no accident; it was planned and prophesied from the beginning. The only road into heaven for all eternity is that we have to plead with God for mercy and believe that Christ's perfect sacrifice for us is sufficient. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ... Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already."* Jn 3_{16,18}

Most church-goers, and many others, believe that Jesus was a real person, and even that he was the 'Son of God'. They believe that he set a good example by doing so many good things. But many do not realise why he came; why he had to be crucified so that we are not, as he said, condemned. No man is ever able to earn the forgiveness of God, however hard he may try. Love does not pretend that sin has no penalty. Love willingly paid the price that justice demanded; even though it required a perfect sacrifice.

Paul taught the Corinthians this truth. He said, *The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, and we might add that today many try to be good and earn approval. But Paul preached Christ crucified ... the power of God and the wisdom of God.* 1 Co 1₁₈₋₂₄

Believing why Jesus had to come and be crucified is the only way to receive God's forgiveness and not be condemned. It is a surprise to many that Jesus said, *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."* Math 10₃₄ His sword was not to kill, but to divide the righteous from

the wicked by enabling some of the wicked to become righteous by believing why Jesus had to be crucified!

Jesus had to reveal this truth to the two going to Emmaus and then to his Apostles after the resurrection. *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ... Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* LU 24^{25,26, 45-47}

It is a surprise to many when God reveals that the greatest example of God fulfilling his judgement of man's sin is in the New Testament, not the Old Testament. The Cross of Christ is the prime purpose of his coming to earth and being born a man. He paid the price of sin, 'the wages' that I could not pay!!

He paid a debt He did not owe.
I owed a debt I could not pay.
I needed someone to wash my sins away.
And now I sing a brand new song -
Amazing Grace!
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.

My debt He paid upon the cross.
He cleansed my soul from all its dross.
I thought that no one could all my sins erase.
But now I sing a brand new song -
Amazing Grace!
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.

O such great pain my Lord endured
When He my sinful soul secured.
I should have died there, but Jesus took my place.
So now I sing a brand new song -
Amazing Grace!
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.

He didn't give to me a loan;
He gave Himself now He's my own.
He's gone to heaven to make for me a place.
And now I sing a brand new song -
Amazing Grace!
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay.

Ellis J Crum

6. Christ's Unshakeable Kingdom

Those who read and believe the scriptures may recall what Almighty God has said. *At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.* Heb 12₂₆₋₂₉ (See also Hag 2_{6,7,21})

In the past God has shaken the earth several times. When?
After Adam and Eve disobeyed, they had to be thrown out of Eden.
In the days of Noah the earth became so wicked that God had to destroy much
of what he had created using a world-wide flood.
He had to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their abomination.
He exiled Israel and also Judah, twice!

Today few acknowledge that God designed and created the whole universe. By accepting the Evolution Theory as truth the once Christian West has largely discarded the Almighty as being irrelevant. He therefore says that he will 'give us up' (Ro 1_{24,26,28}). This will cause us to rapidly become more and more wicked much to Satan's temporary satisfaction. But the prophesied truth is that the Almighty God is going to shake the world and blow away all evil. And he is going to establish a kingdom that cannot be shaken. A kingdom that is holy, righteous and filled with praise to the Lord. A return to Eden, except that Satan will never, ever be seen or heard anywhere. This new unshakable kingdom was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar when Daniel told him what he had dreamt, and then interpreted the meaning. (See

Dan 2). The statue represented all the great world empires, every vestige of which was seen to be blown away like dust. And the little rock, not hewn by human hands, became the great mountain. Scientifically this great mountain is the new eternal world, whose entropy (a system's unavailable energy) never increases any more. (In an eternal world no energy is ever lost). And the Lord God can again pronounce that all his new, unshakeable creation is 'very good'. As Isaiah says, *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the ord shall be established as the highest of the mountains.* Is 2₂

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, he is with thee, O be not dismayed,
For he is thy God, and will still give thee aid;
He'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by his righteous, omnipotent hand.

In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As the days shall demand shall thy strength ever be.

When through the deep waters he calls thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For he will be with thee, in trouble to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
His grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; his only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
He will not, he will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
He'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!

George Keith 1638 - 1716

7. The Promise of Eternal Life in Christ

Eternal life with Christ is a gift that only God can give to a man.

He only gives it to those who repent of their sin and believe that Christ Jesus had to be crucified to pay the wages of sin that no man can ever pay. The only alternative is the awful prospect of eternity in hell. *The wages of sin is death (eternal death), but the free gift of God is eternal life.* Ro 6₂₃ Many today see Jesus as a God of Love; but he is also the God of just Judgement. The New Testament reveals the greatest judgement of all time when the Son of God willingly bore the price of our sin. If there was no judgement of sin then the Cross would not be necessary. Jesus repeatedly pleaded with his listeners to believe in him for the total forgiveness of all sin. That was why he came and why he had to be crucified.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” Jn 3₁₆

“For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” Jn 6₄₀

“My sheep hear my voice, ... I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.” Jn 10₂₇

Thus the Lord God deserves our eternal thanks.

And in heaven the chorus of praise to God is never silent.

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Lord, I believe thy precious blood,
Which at the mercy seat of God
For ever doth for sinners plead,
For me, even for my soul, was shed.

Bold shall I stand in that great day,
For who ought to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am,
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Jesu, be endless praise to thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me,
For me and all thy hands have made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

The holy, meek, unspotted Lamb,
Who from the Father's bosom came,
Who died for me, even me, to atone,
Now for my Lord and God I own.

Ah! give to all thy servants, Lord,
With power to speak thy gracious word,
That all who to thy wounds will flee,
May find eternal life in thee.

John Wesley 1703 - 1791

The Heart of God

Seeing and hearing of so much war, wickedness and unrest how can we pray?
I recently became aware that my prayers were often telling God what to do.
This is most inappropriate. How did the historical prophets and men of God pray?

Habakkuk lived in days when Judah had turned to worshipping idols.
He pleaded with God; he asked, "How long?" Hab 1₂ (also x16 in the Psalms)
He asked, "Why don't you answer prayer and do something to change the nation?"
God's gracious answer surprised the prophet, and it will surprise most of us too.

"I am raising up the Babylonians ..." And they will destroy Jerusalem!
The people of Judah had refused to listen to God's warnings from Jeremiah.
So God had to destroy Zion and exile Judah in order that some would repent.
His unexpected judgement was just and effective.

What will God do today with the God-rejecting UK and the wider world?
See next section on 'Prophecy for the Future'.

God also reveals his gracious heart:

*"Hear, O my people, and I will warn you—
if you would but listen to me, O Israel! ...
"If my people would but listen to me, if Israel would follow my ways,
how quickly would I subdue their enemies ...
you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you." Ps 81₈₋₁₆*

But, and it is a large 'but', Israel would first have to **listen** to God and respond.
They didn't in Jeremiah's day and it is not looking too good for UK now either.
The clear message to all who remain stubborn and unresponsive, is judgement!

In the days of Amos a century earlier, God prophesied the same word to Israel.
God sent a series of five 'natural disasters', drought, disease, fire, ...*yet they did not return to me.* Amos 4₁₋₁₁ Instead of pleading for mercy, they ignored the prophet,
and God! The sad, but just conclusion was:

"Therefore ... prepare to meet your God, O Israel." Amos 4₁₂

Revelation 6-18 tells us clearly how God will judge the increasingly wicked and unresponsive modern world. So this Bible book is largely unread, or misunderstood and rejected. The consequences are dire and the minimal regrets are too late!

Prophecy for the Future

The news media today loves to report all natural and man-induced disasters; everything from earthquakes to national or personal debt. And whenever possible they like to blame 'global warming, Russia or Israel, or greedy powerful leaders. The resulting fear generates many questions. Are they becoming more frequent or gaining intensity, what can we do to avoid the consequences, why is this happening ... ? Bible prophesy is to prepare us and give us reliable hope.

The Times of the Gentiles

Jesus told his disciples, "*Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*" Lu 21₂₄

From 70 AD until 1948 Jerusalem was in Gentile hands. Today it is held by Israel. So one must conclude that the times of the Gentiles is now nearly fulfilled.

Jesus concludes his discourse with the assurance,
"Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. And he told them a parable: Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near." Lu 21₂₈₋₃₁

Today we see the fig tree - Israel - is now in leaf and so the kingdom of God is drawing near. Our response is 'Lord, please come quickly'. (Rev 22₁₇₋₂₀)

God Will Shake the Earth

Almighty God gives us all this clear warning:

At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Heb 12₂₆₋₂₉

Six centuries earlier two Old Testament prophets declared:

Fear not. For thus says the Lord of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. ... Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. Hag 2_{6,7,21}

and

His splendour covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

His brightness was like the light ...

*He stood and measured the earth; **he looked and shook the nations.*** Hab 3₃₋₆

God has spoken and made it clear that his earth is soon to be shaken. Why?

God says 'Once more I am going to shake the earth ...'

History records why he shook the earth on previous occasions.

And God gives us the reason in what is still the most printed book, the Bible.

In the days of Noah God flooded the whole earth. And he tells us why?

Nothing complicated, in one word; great wickedness!

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."

Gen 6₅₋₇

Not many years later the world became so arrogant that they thought they could replace Almighty God. They said, "*Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.*" Gen 11₅ So God shook them. He not only scattered them but he *confused their language so they will not understand each other.* Gen 11₈

Then came the day when *the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.* Gen 19₂₄ Why? Again the answer is simple: *the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord.* Gen 13₁₃ Their wickedness was primarily homosexuality; which is an abomination to the Lord. Lev 18₂₂ 20₁₃ Amazingly both Archbishops now (2024) deny this sexual sin is an abomination.

Ezekiel also reveals their sin: *Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them ... You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, declares the Lord.* Ezek 16_{49,50, 58}

So historically the reason for God shaking the earth is wickedness. God's judgement upon the earth in the 'last days' will be for the same reason.

I will punish the world for its evil ... I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant ... Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts. Is 13_{11,13}

God 'shakes' to persuade reluctant man to turn from his sin, and then honour his Creator, instead of insulting him. Most men will remain stubborn, blind and deceived and are therefore punished. A few are awakened by God's 'shaking' and cry to him for mercy. To them God reveals that Christ has borne all the just punishment for our sin and has graciously offered us new and eternal life.

The writer to the Hebrews reveals a further reason for God's final shaking: *At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken ...* Heb 12₂₆₋₂₈

The shaking ordered by God will include earthquakes, floods, droughts, volcanoes of far greater frequency and magnitude than ever before experienced. This will be confirmed by simple scientific measurement, not a reporter's opinion. The 'when' and 'where' of these disasters will be determined by Almighty God.

God wants us to know for sure that he has planned not only judgement for the wicked, but also a kingdom of righteousness and truth that is unshakable. This kingdom is eternal and unshakeable.

The last two chapters of the Bible reveal more about this new heaven and new unshakable earth. It gives the final conclusion of God's amazing plan for his creation. How can anyone ignore such grace and kindness?

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure;
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labours of my hands,
Can fulfil thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked come to thee for dress;
Helpless look to thee for grace:
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgement throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

Augustus Toplady 1747 - 1778

Jesus is the Rock that no 'bunker busting' or nuclear bomb can ever destroy.
He is the rock upon which the wise man built his house. (Math 7₂₄)
God's righteous kingdom is eternal; it cannot be destroyed;
and there will never even be anyone who wants to do so!

*The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Ps 18₂*

The Great Tribulation

At the end there is not going to be a time of peace, human unity, cooperation, universal prosperity and justice. But it will be a time vastly increased wickedness. Because Almighty God is totally rejected, he is going to bring just punishment and tribulation.

a) Jesus unfolds this when his disciples asked him about 'the end of the age'. *Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Math 24₄₋₂₈*

So there is going to come a time of 'natural disasters' or what insurance companies call 'Acts of God'. They will be of greatly increased frequency and intensity. This will be accompanied by deception, war and persecution of the saints. Yet in the mercy of God, the preaching of the gospel of salvation in Christ will still give men the opportunity to repent, even up to the very end.

b) The book of Revelation 6-18 is given to us by God so that we can know that all the events of the tribulation are ordered by the hand of God. It is the risen Jesus Christ who opens the 7 seals, he orders when the 7 trumpets are to be blown, and he commands the angels to pour down on earth the 7 bowls of God's wrath. He orders the total world economic collapse in a single hour. He overthrows the Woman on the Beast and destroys Babylon the Great. The world will choose to discard Almighty God and ignore all his commands and warnings. He will thus fulfill all the prophesied tribulation. It is God's just judgement upon gross wickedness.

Brief Rule by the Beast

The 'Last Days' will include a time of chaos and despair, greater than at any time since creation. A most evil and demonic man is prophesied in Rev 13 to rule the world. Surprisingly he will be chosen to do so; his rule will not be imposed. It will be like Nazi Germany in 1933 when Adolf Hitler was democratically elected. The popularity of the Beast will be magnified by his miraculous healing. He will have a cheer-leading winger who is able to demonstrate signs and wonders (also Rev 13).

The first horseman of the Apocalypse *had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.* Rev 6₂ How did he conquer? By deceit. This leader will have the character of Satan, whom Jesus describes as *'the father of lies'*. In 8₄₄, God revealed this same leader to Daniel as *a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue.* Dan 8₂₃ His deceitful satanic nature is then described: *He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior.* Dan 8_{24,25}

Daniel was appalled by the vision, which accurately describes the future 'one world government' that rules 'the new world order' - as it is called today.

And the Lord God also wants us to know that this world leader *will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.* Dan 8₂₅ How will this come about?

God gave the answer to Zechariah. Many Christians know that the whole world is going to attack Jerusalem in the last days. And also that God has promised to save Jerusalem, and the Jewish people. See Zech 12₁₋₉ But God reveals that their salvation will only come after Jerusalem is attacked *and taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.* Zech 14_{2,3} This temporary set back is sometimes omitted, but it remains part of God's Word concerning the end which concludes with: *On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.* Zech 14_{8,9} The rule of the Beast is only for 3½ years. *There shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.* Dan 12₁

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

These four horsemen are called to the earth at the start of the great tribulation. They are sent to awaken the God-ignoring world:

1. White horseman given bow and a crown.

He conquers - largely by deceit in two ways:

a) Using exciting, popular, signs and wonders.

False Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. Math 24₂₄

Then I saw another beast ... It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast ... It performs great signs, ... and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth. Rev 13₁₁₋₁₄

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. 2 Thes 2_{9,10}

b) People believe the entirely false Evolution Theory c.f. God's Creation.

Ro 1₁₈₋₃₂ reveals that the prime consequence of this folly is homosexuality, and greatly increasing world-wide wickedness.

2. Bright Red horseman permitted to take peace from the earth, so people slay one another. Given a great sword.

3. Black horseman had a pair of scales. Indicates famine.

But oil and wine not harmed. But rich are largely unaffected?

4. Pale horseman rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him.

These 4 horsemen are given authority to slay ¼ of the world population with sword, famine and pestilence. (=2,000 million!)

c.f. 10 million in WW1 and 50 million in WW2

Persecution

Satan hates God and also all who worship the Almighty.

He hated Adam and Eve and managed to deceive them.

If he can, he will tirelessly exploit all to distract them from God.

C.S.Lewis in 'The Screwtape Letters' reveals many of his wiles.

Reformation history and missionary testimonies always encourage us to endure the certain persecution. And if not us, at least support those who do suffer.

Jesus warns us, "*They will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.*" Math 24₉

In the 20th Century Christianity was respected and often envied.

Now in the 21st Century, Almighty God is largely rejected and despised.

Soon all who believe in Christ will be harshly persecuted.

God Reveals His Eternal Plan

The Bible opens with Almighty God revealing him as the Great Creator.

In the Beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Gen 1₁

The Bible ends with God again creating - *a new heaven and a new earth.* Rev 21₁

In between we are shown how man fell away from God;

and God's patient plan of redemption to save and restore fallen man.

In this 'between time' God reveals to us his plan for an eternal, righteous kingdom.

1. The Righteous Mountain

It may surprise many that God chose to reveal his kingdom to a young, despotic heathen king, who ruled the mighty empire of Babylon.

How did God do it?

Simple really! *Nebuchadnezzar had dreams!* Dan 2₁

Here is a true and fascinating story that continues for the whole chapter.

It involved the young teenager, Daniel, who had been hijacked from Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar had several dreams and the mixture was a complete jumble.

The angry leader threatened all the wise men of Babylon with death. This included

Daniel and his 3 friends. They prayed. And God revealed the dreams to Daniel,

who tells Nebuchadnezzar: "*No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can*

show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven

who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will

be in the latter days. ... "You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image,

mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was

frightening. The head of this image was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” Dan 2₃₁₋₃₅

But what did it mean?

God also revealed this to Daniel, who told the king:

“This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold. Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.” Dan 2₃₆₋₄₅

God chose to tell Nebuchadnezzar the future destruction of the 4 world empires - Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. Almighty God, who also had a plan for the heathen king of Babylon - to save his soul! Dan 4 is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony. And he also told him about the great Mountain not made by human hands - the new promised kingdom of God that is both righteous and eternal.

2. Dry Bones are Resurrected

Ezekiel, God's prophet in Babylon, was also shown this future kingdom of God. He was given the vision of a valley full of dry bones.

God asked him, "*Can these bones live?*"

"O Lord God, you know." (I cannot know)

God then told him, "*Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live ... and you shall know that I am the Lord.*"

Ezekiel prophesied to the bones and to the breath as instructed *and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel ... I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord."* Ezek 37₁₋₁₄

One day we shall see the complete fulfilment of this word of God.

All Israel will stand redeemed and forgiven before the Lord in his new kingdom.

3. Israel is Promised Restoration

Jeremiah preached for 40 years in Jerusalem; but no was inclined to listen.

Then the day came when Babylon besieged Jerusalem. It was 587 BC.

And God told him that his cousin would come and offer to sell him the family field in Anathoth - where the Babylonians were encamped!

God said, "Buy it!" Jeremiah didn't argue; he obeyed. Then God told him why.

Jeremiah insisted that the purchase deed was sealed *in an earthenware vessel, that it may last a long time. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.'* Jer 32₁₃₋₁₅ (By Jews)

God promised that though they would be exiled to Babylon, the day would come when Judah would return. *Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.* Jer 32₃₇₋₄₁

They did return in 536BC. But when the Son of God came to Israel they insisted on crucifying him and were subsequently exiled by Rome in 70AD. But their faithful God had made an 'everlasting covenant' with them. (Gen 17₈) So he enabled their return to their God-given land and became a nation again in 1948.

Today only a few Jews in Israel believe in Jesus as the Son of God, crucified to save and redeem all who believe and seek his mercy. But it is not the end of the story. God's word to Jeremiah continued: *In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.*' Jer 33₁₅ And he reveals the certainty of his faithfulness by saying: *If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken.* Jer 33_{20,21}

God's true word to Israel remains: *Your pain is incurable. Because your guilt is great, because your sins are flagrant.* Then he adds: *I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, declares the Lord, because they have called you an outcast: It is Zion, for whom no one cares!*' Jer 30_{15,17} Clearly God never stops caring for Israel.

When Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Jer 31_{3,4}

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer 31_{33,34}

At the end, Israel will continue to be attacked by the world's nations, but Almighty God has promised to protect his people; his covenant still stands.

On that day ... the Lord will protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem ... And on that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. ... And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall

mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child. ... On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. Zech 12₆ -13₁

The nations of the world need to listen to the word that God promised to Abraham: *"I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Gen 12₃
Every nation that turns its hand against Israel will be under the curse of God!
The UK, the EU and the UN need to change course, and seek the mercy of God; else we will remain under the disastrous curse of the Almighty.

Remember God made an unconditional and eternal covenant with Abraham concerning the land - the 'promised land'. *I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.* Gen 17_{7,8}

Some men may still acknowledge that *the earth is the Lord's* Ps 24₁ because he created it all and everything in it. But most nations today severely challenge this covenant of God with the descendants of Abraham, and will pay a high price for doing so.

Be Ready and Eager for Christ's Return

The need to be ready is not an option:

Because Jesus tells us: *"You also **must** be ready ..."* Math 24₄₄

In other words he warns us that the consequences of not being ready are severe. Men are largely either careless, indifferent or too busy and have wrong priorities. It is always foolish to ignore the warnings of Almighty God.

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ... Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." Math 24_{36, 42}

The anticipation of Christ's return has continued for 2,000 years and counting!
His patience is amazing.

Jesus continues his warning with 4 short stories - how very Jewish!
Each story ends with a 'not ready' crisis when 'the Master' returns unexpectedly.
They each tell us to 'keep watch' and how to use our short lifespan during this time of waiting.

1) Two servants; one wise and the other wicked. Math 24₄₅₋₅₁

The faithful servant is put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time, and does so. As a result he will put him in charge of all his possessions. The wicked servant is bored, arrogant and cruel. He says to himself, 'my master is staying away a long time'. So he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. He misused his power and privileged life-style. He is not faithful, but wicked. What is the result when the Master returns unexpectedly? He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This makes it very plain that Almighty God is not like a nice loving cuddly teddy-bear as many seem to portray him today. Suddenly it was too late and the end is dire.

"True faith is not a single step, but a long walk."

2) 10 Virgins; 5 wise and 5 foolish. Math 25₁₋₁₃

All 10 had lamps and all 10 went out hoping to meet the bridegroom. The only difference was that the wise also took some spare oil. They expected his coming, but also prepared for a delay. How do we prepare for the apparent delay of the return of Jesus. Do we work as if there is no tomorrow, but prepare for a long delay? They all fell asleep. The wise were able to refill their lamps. They had the truth of God's Word in their hearts, stored up. They were ready and obeyed. But the foolish were lazy, unprepared, possibly distracted or presumptuous. They had to go and buy oil. But then it was too late. The door was shut. Like when God shut the door of Noah's Ark. When the foolish eventually knocked, they were told the awful truth, "I don't know you!" Heaven's door was locked and could not be opened.

3) Talents. Five, Two and One. Math 25₁₄₋₃₀

A man was going on a journey; he called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. The journey and the time were both long. The Five and the Two talent men worked faithfully. Both doubled their entrustment, and for their faithful work were rewarded and invited to share the Master's happiness. But the one-talent man was different. He thought his Master was hard and expected too much. Why did he think this? The Master had told him

the Law, what he should and should not do. But how could a kind Master expect him to achieve obedience to every command? He thought the Master was 'hard' and unjust. Paul wrote, the Law is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. Gal 3₂₄ Not being able to keep the Law was intended to make us turn to Christ for forgiveness and help. But this one talent man refused, he gave up (God called him 'lazy'). He refused to plead for Christ to give him new birth. The Master was right to condemn such a wicked, lazy man. The Christian life is not easy, but our gracious and merciful Saviour is definitely not a 'hard man', he is consistently most gracious and merciful. However, he does require that as sinful men we come before him humbly, admitting our weakness and inability to be righteous and meekly plead for mercy and forgiveness. He expects Christians to be wholehearted; not just occasional, not just 10%, not just give God "the Sunday's and the dog-ends of our time". He expects us to value, to treasure and to share the new life that he has given us and which cost him death on a Cross. This is where the careless one talent man went so badly astray. He knew he couldn't keep the law but was too proud to come before the Lord and plead for mercy. He was like Esau; a proud, macho man who 'despised his birthright' (Gen 25₃₄) and sold it for a single bowl of stew! But God declared, "*Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*" (Mal 1_{2,3}). Strong words, but justified.

(In case any should think 'but that was Old Testament', Paul quotes the same truth in Ro 9₁₃). Jacob (and the multi-talent men) hungered for God; such was their longing that he wrestled all night and in the morning cried, "*I will not let you go unless you bless me.*" (Gen 32₂₆). But Esau and the one-talent man had no such longing. He had to hear the Master's verdict, "Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." His life was not just a foolish mistake, but an eternal disaster. One ordained minister I heard preaching on this story was completely off target when he concluded, "The one talent man should have tried a little harder."! No man can keep the Law, however hard he tries. Salvation is by faith in what Jesus has done for us, never by our own works.

4) Sheep and Goats Math 25₃₁₋₄₆

This is a slightly different story. It involves why God separated them at the end according to what they had done for the poor, hungry and forsaken during their lifetime. The 'sheep' saw the needy people and had compassion. They shared, fed, clothed and housed them without expecting any reward; and certainly not for any 'photo opportunity'. The 'goats' were too busy enjoying themselves to notice others in need; or if they did see them, it didn't bother them, they didn't care. In many ways it is similar to the story of the 'Good Samaritan' where Jesus answered

the question 'who was neighbour to the man left to die by thieves'? The Samaritan cared, the others did not and passed by on the other side. God's separation of the 'sheep' and 'goats' is both final and extreme.

It should be added that the 'sheep' did not gain a place in heaven because of their good deeds. Rather that they had compassion because they put into practice their new life in Christ. Like Noah; he was not saved because he obeyed God and built the Ark. He was saved by God and therefore he was righteous and obedient. Abel was saved not because he gave his best. He gave his best in gratitude for being saved, for having faith in the salvation earned by the Saviour. (Heb 11₄) The lady who anointed Jesus was not forgiven because she gave the most expensive ointment, she gave the best because she knew that Jesus had forgiven her.

Jesus told these 4 stories for a very good reason. Individually each of them is fairly straight forward for the Christian to understand. So why did he consider it necessary to tell them? Very simply, because the consequence of not being ready for Christ's return and judgement is so dire. He does not want any of his creation to suffer the death that is the wages of sin.

Does the Church today need to hear this warning about being ready?
Emphatically, Yes!

If we knew Jesus was planning to return early tomorrow morning, how much would my life-style need to change? How much sleep would I get after trying to complete my readiness?!

Dare to be different from the world, don't just 'swim with the tide'. (See Ro 12₂)

Be eager, continually longing with all our hearts for the great day of the return of Jesus Christ, and the eternal victory over all temptation and sin.

He who loves the coming of the Lord
is not he who affirms it is far off, nor is it he who says it is near,
rather it is he who, whether it is far off or near,
awaits it with sincere faith, steadfast hope and fervent love.

Augustine

The Carpenter

Mk 6₃ Math 13₅₅ "Isn't this the carpenter?"

We know the gospel story
And of his humble birth,
But who would think a king could be
A Carpenter on earth?
And yet in contemplation
It's not so very odd
For carpenters mend broken things -
Why not the Son of God?
For many years at Joseph's side
He worked with saw and plane
And waited for his Father's time,
The reason that he came.
They heard him speak in Galilee,
Amazed as wisdom flowed
For "Was not this the Carpenter,
Whose family we know?"
And then that final irony
Upon a cross of wood
They saw him die, the Son of God,
Alone, the truly good.
He'd promised this was not the end,
He'd rise, return again,
That those who waited on his word
Would not believe in vain,
For only he could pay the price
Of sin, not his, but mine;
This Carpenter from Nazareth
Who stepped into our time.
And one day, coming on the clouds,
Around the world will flash
The long awaited headline news
"The Carpenter is back!"

by Paula Worth

Scriptures Concerning the 'Last Days'

Our gracious God has given us much information - pages 45 to 60.

May it encourage us all to be ready for the great day when Jesus returns.

Is 2₂ *In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains.*

Is 2₁₂₋₁₈ *The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, ... The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear. ... Men will flee to caves in the rocks.*

Is 4₂₋₄ *In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honour of the survivors of Israel. And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.*

Is 17₁ *Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins.*

Is 18_{1,7} *Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush, (upper Nile) which sends envoys by sea in papyrus boats over the water. ... At that time gifts will be brought to the Lord Almighty from a people tall and smooth-skinned, from a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers.*

Is 19₂₋₂₂ *I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian--brother will fight against brother ... The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; ... I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them. ... The waters of the river will dry up. ... The Lord has poured into them a spirit of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does. ... In that day the Egyptians will be like women. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the Lord Almighty raises against them. And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians. ... When they cry out to the Lord because of their oppressors, he will send them a saviour and defender, and he will rescue them. So the Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the Lord. ... The Lord will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them.*

- Is 19₂₃₋₂₅ *In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth. The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."*
- Is 21₉ *Babylon has fallen, has fallen! All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!*
- Is 24₁₋₂₃ *See, the Lord is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants. ... The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. ... In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon ... The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the Lord Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem ... gloriously.*
- Is 25₆₋₈ *On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine--the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.*
- Is 29₅₋₇ *But your many enemies will become like fine dust, the ruthless hordes like blown chaff. Suddenly, in an instant, the Lord Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire. Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel, that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream.*
- Is 32_{1-5,14-18} *See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. The mind of the rash will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear. No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected. The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city*

deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, Till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest. Justice will dwell in the desert and righteousness live in the fertile field. The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest.

Is 34₂₋₄ *The Lord is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter. ... All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll.*

Is 35₁₋₁₀ *The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus. ... Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness ... it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it. No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

Is 51₁₁ *The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.*

Is 60₁₋₃ *Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

Is 60₁₅₋₂₁ *Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters*

righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.

Is 62²⁻⁴ *The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married.*

Is 65¹⁷⁻¹⁹ *Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*

Is 66^{15,16} *See, the Lord is coming with fire, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with his sword the Lord will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the Lord.*

Jer 3^{17,18} *At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.*

Jer 31³⁸⁻⁴⁰ *"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when this city will be rebuilt for me ... The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown ... will be holy to the Lord. The city will never again be uprooted or*

demolished."

- Jer 33_{15,16} *In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.*
- Ezek 47₇₋₁₂ *I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ... Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. ... Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.*
- Ezek 48₃₅ *And the name of the city from that time on will be:
THE LORD IS THERE.*
- Dan 2₄₀₋₄₅ *Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron--for iron breaks and smashes everything--and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure for ever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future.*
- Dan 7_{8, 21, 22} *While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ... As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the*

Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

Dan 7²³⁻²⁷ *The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed for ever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'*

Dan 8²³⁻²⁵ *In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.*

Dan 9²⁴ *70 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.*

Dan 12¹⁻⁴ *At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.*

- Dan 12₇₋₁₂ *The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed." I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days. As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."*
- Joel 2₂₈₋₃₁ *(After the people repent) I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*
- Joel 3_{1,2} *In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.*
- Joel 3₉₋₁₇ *Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men draw near and attack. Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weakling say, "I am strong!" ... For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy hill. Jerusalem will be holy; never again will foreigners invade her.*

- Mic 4₁₋₃ *In the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains ... Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more.*
- Zeph 3₁₄₋₂₀ *Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy. The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you; never again will you fear any harm. ... he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. ... At that time I will gather you; at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honour and praise among all the peoples of the earth.*
- Zech 2_{4,5} *Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of men and livestock in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the Lord, 'and I will be its glory within.'*
- Zech 12₇₋₉ *The Lord will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honour of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the Lord going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.*
- Zech 14₂₋₅ *I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.*

- Zech 14¹²⁻¹⁴ *This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the Lord with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected.*
- Mal 4^{1,2} *"Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire," says the Lord Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who reverence my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings."*
- Math 24²¹⁻³¹
Mk 13¹⁸⁻²⁷
Lu 21²⁵⁻²⁸ *For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. ... For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ... Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds.*
- Math 13³⁹⁻⁴³ *The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*
- Math 24³⁶⁻³⁹
Mk 13³²⁻³⁷ *No-one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will*

be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

- Math 24₃₅ *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*
Mk 13₃₁ LU 21₃₃
- Math 24₄₄ *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an*
Math 25₁₃ *hour when you do not expect him.*
- Math 25_{31,32} *When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,*
he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be
gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another
as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
- LU 1_{32,33} *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord*
God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over
the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end.
- LU 21₂₄ *Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the*
Gentiles are fulfilled.
- Act 1₁₁ *This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come*
back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.
- Ro 11_{2, 25, 29} *God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew ... Israel has*
experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles
has come in ... for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.
- Ro 13_{11,12} *Understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up*
from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we
first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.
- 1 Thes 4₁₅₋₁₇ *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still*
alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede
those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down
from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel
and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.
After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together
with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be
with the Lord for ever.

- 2 Thes 1₆₋₁₀ *God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed.*
- 2 Thes 2₁₋₁₂ *Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him ... Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.*
- Heb 11₁₄₋₁₆ *People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*
- Heb 11_{39,40} *These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

- Jms 5₁ *Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.*
- 2 Pe 3₃₋₆ *In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.*
- 2 Pe 3₇₋₁₀ *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*
- Rev 6₁₋₁₇ *The Lamb opens the seven seals:*
1. *White horse - conquest and domination*
 2. *Red horse - war and bloodshed*
 3. *Black horse - famine*
 4. *Pale horse - Disease. 1/4 die*
 5. *Martyrs ask, "How long?"*
 6. *Great Earthquake, sun darkened, stars fall, terror*
 7. *Thunder, lightning, earthquake*
- Then silence + censer filled with fire hurled on earth.*
- Rev 7₃ *Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.*
- Rev 7₁₄₋₁₇ *These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to*

springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Rev 8₆ - 9₂₁

Seven angels sound their trumpets:

Rev 11₁₅₋₁₉

- 1. Hail and fire. Vegetation burned*
- 2. Blazing Mt. thrown into sea. Fish and sailors die*
- 3. Blazing star falls on rivers. Fresh water bitter*
- 4. Sun, moon and stars struck. Darkened*
- 5. Star falls. Abyss opens. Locusts sting unbelievers*
- 6. zoom troops kill. Men refuse to repent*
- 7. Thunder, lightning, earthquake*

Rev 10_{10,11}

I took the little scroll from the angel's hand ... Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings."

Rev 11₁₋₁₃

Go and measure the temple of God and the altar ... but exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. ... when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city ... where also their Lord was crucified. ... But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet ... At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Rev 13₁₋₈

I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ... One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast. Men worshipped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshipped the beast ... The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for forty-two months. ... He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.

Rev 13₁₁₋₁₇ *I saw another beast, coming out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. And he performed great and miraculous signs. ... he deceived the inhabitants of the earth. ... He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no-one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.*

Rev 14₆₋₁₂ **Angels Proclaim:**

1. *Fear God and give him glory*
2. *Fallen is Babylon the Great*
3. *All who worship the beast and receive mark will drink the wine of God's fury.*

Rev 14₁₄₋₂₀ **Three Angels 'swing their sickles on the earth'. Blood flows deep.**

Rev 16₁₋₂₁ **Bowls of God's wrath:**

1. *Sores on all who have the mark of the beast*
2. *Sea turns to blood. All fish die*
3. *Rivers and springs turn to blood. Just judgement*
4. *Sun scorches people with fire. Men curse God*
5. *Kingdom of beast darkened. Men in agony curse God*
6. *Dragon sends evil spirits to gather kings for war*
7. *Huge earthquake and hail stones. Men curse God.*

Rev 17₁₋₁₈ *Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries. ... the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints ... she has the seven heads and ten horns ... The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings.*

...

The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked ... The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.

Rev 18₂₋₂₄

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons. ... In one hour your doom has come! The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no-one buys their cargoes any more - cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and ... bodies and souls of men. ... the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. ... Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth.

Rev 19₆₋₁₀

Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. ... Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! ... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Rev 19₁₁₋₁₆

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

Rev 19₁₉₋₂₁

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur. The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds

gorged themselves on their flesh.

Rev 20₁₋₃

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