

PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST**Part 1**

Jesus really is going to return again. He is not coming in a vacuum, apart from a season of preparation. He will have a strategic plan and a people who will partner with Him to see this plan unfold and be accomplished. Jesus is not playing “catch-up” with Satan and trying to counteract Satan’s strategies. Jesus is the wisest King and Leader, in time and outside of time. He is coming to transition the current world system to an eternal Heavenly system. This is our hope! This is the full promise of the “Good News” we testify to.

**Matthew 24:42-44-** <sup>42</sup> *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup> *But know this that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.* <sup>44</sup> *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

**Revelation 1:1-2** *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, <sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.*

**I. PERSONAL ENCOUNTER LEADS TO OBEDIENCE**

- A. Jesus’s disciples had encountered him many times in many different circumstances. They knew Jesus on a personal level. Toward the end of Jesus’ ministry the disciples asked Him about the details of His return to Jerusalem after His death. If they talked, ate meals, slept, played together for nearly 3 years and still abandoned Jesus in the hour of His capture what makes us think we will remain faithful in the hour of the greatest hardship?
- B. The foundation of the Church is the revelation of Jesus.
- C. Again, this is the same command of Jesus from Revelation when He said to the churches, *“To him who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*
- D. **Matthew 16:17** *Blessed are you (Peter)...flesh and blood has not revealed this...but My Father in heaven.*
- E. Our lives are limited to our own human understanding. We must receive an increase in understanding in order to live life to the fullest. This is the gift of a loving Heavenly Father (Father of Glory); to give birth to sons & daughters of glory (*great beauty and splendor*).
- F. The Scripture is more than intellectual ideas, but it is a divine revelation, an unveiling of spiritual things which requires supernatural ability and produces spiritual effects on the *“eyes of our understanding being enlightened.”* In other words, we must pray for this as the top priority in our life. This must not be reduced to our minds receiving new ideas.
- G. God as light imparts insight, holiness and happiness with anointed encounters.
- H. Revelation is the most powerful influence that strengthens & equips our hearts for wholeheartedness. *Seeing determines the depth of our sustained choices for holiness.*
- I. **That you may know** (experience) (Eph. 1:18) – to know is to encounter and experience God’s glory. Revelation is the unveiling of God Himself.
  1. The Greek word “knowledge” (epignosis) refers to *experiential* knowledge which is much more than informational knowledge of true facts about God.
  2. To know or encounter God is the essence of eternal salvation (*John 17:3; Phil 3:10*).

J. **John 17:3** *This is eternal life, that they may know (experience) You, the only God and Jesus Christ.*

K. Eternal Encounter & Revelation=Eternal Life

L. Peter had received insight that could only come from the Heavenly Father by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was declaring that this is the way of heaven.

**II. ENCOUNTERING JESUS: REVELATION 1**

A. **Jesus is the First and the Last:** Humanity. He is the first to be raised from the dead and the first in authority (Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 5:12). This is the title Jesus used most (Rev. 1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13). He spoke it in context to His death and resurrection calling us to resist the fear of martyrdom.

- **Revelation 2:8-10** *These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life...10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer...be faithful until death.*
- **Colossians 1:15-18** *He is...the firstborn over all creation...18 He is the head of the body...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

B. **Alpha and Omega:** Deity with absolute completeness in wisdom and love. The Greek alphabet started with “alpha” and ended with “omega”. The common phrase Alpha and Omega means the first and last letters including all the letters in between to indicate completeness.

C. This title sets forth Jesus as the sovereign Lord over everything that takes place in the entire course of history. Jesus established an eternal plan for us in which nothing is missing. His Bride has all the elements necessary for eternal love, joy, peace, and fascination without sin yet retaining a free will.

D. **Voice like a trumpet:** A witness who faithfully warns the people of coming judgment. He is the Faithful and True Witness telling us the truth (**Rev. 1:5; 3:14**).

- **Ezekiel 33:6** *If the watchman sees the sword (judgment) coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned... (their) blood I will require at the watchman's hand.*

E. **Son of Man:** the God-Man who rules all nations as the King of kings seen in Dan. 7:13-14.

- **Daniel 7:13-14** *Behold, One like the Son of Man...came to the Ancient of Days... 14 Then to Him was given dominion...that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away...*

F. **Garment down to His feet:** By wearing the robe of the High Priest, Jesus shows Himself as the sympathetic High Priest who made a way for us to live in God’s presence.

- **Hebrews 10:19-22** *Having boldness to enter the Holiest...20 by a new and living way...through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest...22 let us draw near...*
- **Hebrews 4:14-16** *We have a great High Priest...Jesus the Son of God...15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

G. **Girded about the chest with a golden band:** breastplate of the high priest (**Ex. 25:7; Lev. 16:4**)

H. **Head and hair white like wool, as white as snow:** Ancient of Days has white hair (**Dan 7:9**). Jesus’ eternal preexistence with pure and perfect wisdom and dignity (**Lev 19:32; Prov 16:31**).

- **Daniel 7:9** *The Ancient of Days was seated...the hair of His head was like pure wool.*
- I. **Holding the 7 stars in His right hand**: Jesus holds the seven stars (*apostolic/regional church leaders*) as His promise to anoint, direct, and protect them. He is tender towards us even when we feel inadequate or like a failure. Jesus holds His leaders as He helps us to do that which He entrusts to us.
  - J. **Walks in the midst of the 7 golden lampstands**: He walks in the midst of the candlesticks (church; **Rev. 1:20**) in His deep involvement with us. He walks with us aware of our needs, frailty and pressures.
    - **Exodus 33:3** *I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way...*
  - K. **Eyes like a flame of fire**: His knowledge searches and penetrates all things as fire penetrates metal. He is fully God with eyes like fire to impart holy love and remove all that hinders love. He has eyes of love and zeal for His people as a Bridegroom. He imparts love and holiness.
    - **Revelation 2:18-23** *The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass...20 I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel...to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality... 21 I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation...23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts.*
  - L. **Feet like fine brass**: Judgment of sin. His feet are like fine brass that judges all His enemies. His commitment is as a mighty warrior to trample over Jezebel in victory. He will bring all His enemies under His feet (**Ps. 110; Isa. 63**).
  - M. **Voice as the sound of many waters**: powerful as in Gen. 1 and directs the armies of heaven; the fullness of sound is portrayed
    - **Joel 2:11** *The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great...*
  - N. **Sharp two-edged sword coming out of His mouth**: Releases the Holy Spirit and judgment. He has zeal to fight for us against all that opposes us with the sword of His mouth. The breath of Jesus' mouth is another way of expressing the power of His words.
    - **Ephesians 6:17** *The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...*
    - **Revelation 19:15** *Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron.*
  - O. **He who lives**: He came back to life. He has power over death and gives eternal life. He was "dead and came to life" after He experienced the suffering of a cruel death. He understands our humanity and suffering and possesses power over death knowing the way to victory. Our view of death is different from Jesus' because He is rooted in eternity.
  - P. **Countenance like the sun**: exhilarates His Church and is a weapon against His enemies since it is impossible to look directly into the sun. He is the Morning Star that fills us with brightness.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:8** *Then the lawless one (Antichrist) will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

- Q. **Keys of the kingdom:** Authority over Hades and Death and key of David to establish the Kingdom. He has the key of David to open and shut all necessary doors.
- R. The Kingdom of heaven is being established wherever the revelation of Jesus Christ is being sought and released. God's government rests in the midst of a people of agreement; intercession and worship.
- S. **Isaiah 22:22** *The key of the house of David, I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.*

## Part 2

### PREPARATION FOR THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

**Matthew 24:42-44-** <sup>42</sup> *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup> *But know this that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.* <sup>44</sup> *Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

**REVIEW-** Last week we discussed the revelation of Jesus as the foundation of the Church of Jesus and the individual Follower of Christ. We looked at the beauty, power, and authority of Jesus as He was revealed by an angel to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos. If we don't stand before this Man now, we will stumble and fall in the days ahead.

#### I. THE COMMAND TO KNOW THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

- A. Jesus is rebuking His generation for NOT knowing the hour upon them (**Mt. 24:36-44**).
- B. The entire chapter of **Mt. 24** is devoted to "answering the disciple's question" about when Jesus will return to set up His kingdom on earth.
- **Mt. 24:3-** *"...Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*
- C. Jesus' generation rejected Him and missed it; the hour of their visitation.
- D. Jesus gives the first prescription and warning for discerning the end-time generation. That generation will be marked by intense deception. There will be a systematic attempt to deceive many from the Truth of Jesus' return. Doctrines of demons and man alike will attempt to minimize the command of Jesus to know the signs of the time. We are already experiencing this in our culture. No Ten Commandments, No prayer in public places, No speaking about moral absolutes, etc. "Don't tell us that marriage is limited to Traditional Man/Woman marriage!"
- E. Jesus describes the **first time-frame** or season leading into His return as *"the beginning of sorrows"*.
- **Mt. 24:8-** *"All these are the beginning of sorrows."*

- Deception, False Christs, Wars & Rumors of Wars, Nation Against Nation, Kingdom Against Kingdom, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes.
- F. The generation who sees ALL of these things happening and coming to pass globally, know that you are the generation who will see the coming of Jesus.
- **Mt. 24:33-34**- *“So you also, when you see all these things, know that it (He/Jesus) is near—at the doors!* <sup>34</sup> *Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.*
- G. After the characteristics are laid out before the Disciples, Jesus then says, *“Don’t be troubled/fearful.”* We must see Jesus’ mercy and love in defining when He will return. HE IS RETURNING and He desires that we would be anticipating His coming like a love-sick Bride.
- H. Jesus explains what must happen first, before He returns (**Mt. 24:3-28**).
- I. **Mt. 24:29-30** *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days...Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”*
- J. There will be mourning and great regret (*suffering loss*) for those who did not discern the season they lived in that day when we see Him in the clouds.
- K. There is such confusion in the church today around the coming of Jesus and many have given up trying to make sense of it all.
- L. Jesus goes on further to give an example of “how to know” when He will return from the parable of the fig tree.
- M. **Mt. 24:32-33**- *“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.”* <sup>33</sup> *So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors!*
- N. Jesus teaching this parable is similar to someone pointing to the weather patterns in the skies. In the same manner that we look into the sky to discern if rain is coming, so too we look at the times and seasons of human history to discern the return of Jesus Christ.

## II. AS THE DAYS OF NOAH

- A. Jesus points to Noah’s generation for parallel (**Mt. 24:37**)
- B. The reality of Noah’s generation will be the reality of the final/end-time generation.
1. **Mt. 24:38**- *For as in the days before the flood (judgment), they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,...”*
  2. Noah’s generation was simply “doing life” and living without eternity in site. They neglected to discern the coming judgment.
  3. The earth and all of its inhabitation had reached its full capacity. At that point, God said that He was stepping in to clean house. God continued to offer up salvation by providing safety from the coming storm, ie. The Ark. Only one family followed the Lord’s leading in that hour.
  4. **Genesis 7:7**- *“So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood.”*
  5. The safest place to be in the midst of impending storms and crisis is in the hands of the Lord of the storms. As we come into agreement with Jesus, we find His refuge and protection. Full & Complete obedience, not perfection as we imagine, is the place of safety. We are far from this

reality as a corporate people, hoping that we can hold on to what we have built our lives to be. It is changing for many though as the Holy Spirit draws near in power.

6. **Mt. 7:24-** *“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:”*
  7. We are really good at “hearing His sayings” but not so good at “doing His sayings”.
  8. It is Jesus mercy plan to come and remove every false structure built outside of an eternal relationship with Him (idolatry).
- C. **Mt. 24:40-41** are NOT verses describing the rapture! It is describing that those who are removed are suffering God’s targeted judgment.
  - D. To “Be Taken” in this context is a very bad thing. As the flood took many away in Noah’s day, so the coming of Jesus will cause many to face unexpected loss and judgment.
  - E. God promises to provide safety to His people in the “Ark of God”. This is what we are asking the Lord for in our city; an ark or a pocket of mercy or a region of God’s supernatural favor.
  - F. This is a crucial part of recruiting and establishing many in our community to commit to weekly prayer meetings in the Prayer Room.
  - G. **Psalm 91:1-** *“He who dwells (lives) in the secret place (lifestyle of prayer) of the Most High, Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”*
  - H. **Ps. 91:1-** *“Those who go to God Most High for safety will be protected by the Almighty.” (NCV)*

### III. THE COMMAND TO WATCH & PRAY

- A. Jesus calls his Disciples to *“Watch therefore” (Mt. 24:42).*
- B. Our highest calling in the generation Jesus returns is to live a life of WATCHFULNESS! The very prescription leading to safety and proper preparation is lives of prayer and fasting. Though this is true, prayer is still not most central in the lives of Believers and in Christian ministries in this generation. **Most Christians see prayer as a seasoning we add to the meal.** This is changing in our generation.
- C. Watch **“Therefore”**= “in light of this information”= “now, to connect the dots”
- D. Jesus is teaching His followers how to gain insight in an hour of increasing darkness & global crisis.
- E. Jesus commands every church in Revelation to *“...have eyes to see & ears to hear”*.
- F. **Mt. 24:10 & 12-** *“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another” ... “the love of many will grow cold.”*
- G. The offense over who Jesus is and how He has planned to judge wickedness will offend many, even Christians.
- H. **2 Thess. 2:3-** *“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away (from faith) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,.”*
- I. Suffering happens to everyone, even American Christians. Judgment from God targets only sinful humanity and wicked demons of darkness!
- J. **Mt. 26:41-** *“Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*
- K. Jesus was saying to His disciples that without maintaining a spirit of prayer, they could fall in temptation or deception.

- L. **Christians who do not have a lifestyle of prayer in the hour we are beginning to walk into will fall away. Ministries who do not have a culture of prayer will struggle to maintain their operations.**
- M. **Matthew 24:43-** *“But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.*
- O. The Thief, who is Satan, is going to deceive many, even the elect if possible (**Mt. 24:24**).
- P. My personal belief is that many Christians will forfeit varying amounts of eternal rewards simply by neglecting to maintain an alert spirit and vigilant spiritual life. Satan will lead many into deception which will result in loss, at best, and eternal separation from God, at worst.
- N. “Therefore”- “...Be ready” Jesus says in **Mt. 24:44**.
- O. **Mark 13:37-** *“I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!”* (NLT)
- P. We must keep our eyes open to see rightly and ears open to hear clearly! This is our call in the hour of the greatest crisis known to human history and the promise of the greatest revival and awakening through all of human history.

### Part 3

#### “Jesus’s Description of the End-Time Church”

#### I. JESUS DEFINES WHAT THE END-TIME CHURCH WILL LOOK LIKE

- A. **Revelation 2:7; 11; 17; 29; 3:6; 13; 22-** *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*
- B. This one phrase Jesus speaks seven (7) times in Revelation and repeats many times in his earthly ministry seen in the 4 gospels. There is something burning in the heart of Jesus that would lead Him to repeat this one phrase frequently, especially after delivering correction, praise, and promise of coming eternal rewards to the faithful.
- C. These letters show us the kind of Church that Jesus is building and what His agenda is. In them, **Jesus defines love and relevance** to Heaven and on the Earth according to His terms.
- D. *“The Book of Revelation defines the spiritual maturity necessary for the Church, under Jesus’ leadership, to pray to release God’s judgment against the Antichrist in the way Moses released the ten plagues on Egypt, and as the apostles established the Church in Acts.”* (**Mike Bickle**)

#### II. APPLYING THE SEVEN PROPHETIC LETTERS:

- A. **Individually**: These letters were written to inspire response from individuals.
- B. **Corporately**: The most powerful application is when local churches walk in these truths together.
- C. **Historically**: The letters were first written to seven historical churches in John’s generation to address the actual conditions of seven real churches. Some see parallels in the spiritual conditions of the seven churches of Asia in the first century to the spiritual conditions of successive periods in church history.
- D. **Universally**: All churches in the first century and throughout 2,000 years of church history, just as the letter to the Romans was for the church at Rome and all churches past, present, and future.
- E. **Eschatologically**: To prepare the end-time Church for the events seen in Revelation 6-19. This is when there will be the most believers in history living in the most difficult time in history.

### III. EQUIPING HIS CHURCH TO WALK IN LOVE

- A. Only when the church of Jesus is pursuing the First Commandment in first place (Mt. 22:37-38) will we be ready to walk in the “*greater works than these*”. Otherwise, Jesus will not be ready to trust us with such power and authority.
- B. **John 14:12-14** *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. <sup>13</sup> And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.*
- C. Jesus is a really wise leader and His Father is a very wise Heavenly Father to us. He is a very competent Manager and Shepherd over His Church.
- D. **Revelation 1:6** *and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*
- E. **Revelation 1:5-7** *Glory and strength to Christ, who loves us, who blood-washed our sins from our lives, who made us a Kingdom, Priests for his Father, **forever**—and yes, he’s on his way! Riding the clouds, he’ll be seen by every eye, those who mocked and killed him will see him, People from all nations and all times will tear their clothes in lament. Oh, Yes. (The Message)*
- F. This is the identity of God’s people and He is sending supernatural grace to us to discover and walk out this calling.
- G. It has always been the desire of the Father to have a resting place on the earth with His created Sons & Daughters (Ps. 132). God only rests when we are agreeing with His leadership and cease striving against Him.
- H. The Father’s highest priority in the end-time generation is and will be the preparation of a spotless & blameless Bride who is ready for His worthy Son! This preparation will increase at an accelerated rate through the Great Tribulation.
- I. **Revelation 19:5-8** *Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” <sup>6</sup> And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*
- J. Our hearts must be equipped and prepared for the coming outpouring so that we are not offended. Jesus declared to John’s disciples the fasting of the aching hearts of His followers before His second coming. He then goes on to say that His coming will be preceded with an outpouring of wine.
- K. **Matthew 9:17** *Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”*

### IV. OBEYING HIS COMMANDS

- A. If judgment starts in the House of God, then God holds the leadership of the Church responsible for hearing clearly and speaking boldly.
- B. **1 Peter 4:17** *For the time has come for judgment (loving correction) to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

- C. The judgment of the Eternal Creator is good news. It is only bad news to the one who refuses to be corrected. There are none righteous, not one, (Rm. 3:10) including one leader. We must trust the Eternal God's leadership.
- D. **Revelation 2:1** *"To the angel (Messenger) of the church of Ephesus write..." (2:8-Smyrna; 2:12-Pergamos; 2:18-Pergamos; 3:1-Sardis; 3:7-Philadelphia; 3:14-Laodicea)*
- E. The apostolic messenger was responsible to *guard the message* and not let it be distorted or diluted through compromise, fear or neglect. The apostolic leaders are responsible before God to *boldly proclaim* what Jesus revealed in these letters clearly, consistently and tenderly, while *establishing a clear action plan* to implement the truths practically in our day-to-day lives. This is the declaration of the Sermon On the Mount life walked out in the final generation who awaits Jesus' return.
- F. As a ministry in our city, we want to be bold to proclaim the clear and accurate message of this book (Revelation) for a couple of keys reasons.
  1. We must be accountable to our Bridegroom, King, and Judge. He is not a Leader who we present to "try Him on and see if He fits your lifestyle". He is God and He will return to rule as King forever on the Earth.
  2. We want to speak boldly and clearly without the fear of man so that others will have confidence to walk this mandate out. As we proclaim it and model it others will be inspired to follow (Rev.2-3 church mandate).

**V. HEEDING HIS WARNINGS**

- A. **"Yet I have this against you..."**- He corrects those whom He loves (Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 3:19).
- B. **Proverbs 3:11-12** *My child, don't reject the Lord's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. <sup>12</sup> For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.*
- C. Jesus' correction is not rejection! Jesus had corrections "against" three churches: Ephesus (**2:4**), Pergamos (**2:14**) Thyatira (**2:20**).
- D. It is interesting that Jesus gave affirmation before correction (Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira). Two churches received no affirmation (Sardis and Laodicea).
- E. **Revelation 3:19** Jesus says, *"I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference."*
- F. Two churches received no corporate correction (Smyrna, Philadelphia).
- G. **Passivity** (neglecting the 1<sup>st</sup> command)- Jesus desires more than faithful workers. He strongly desires faithful lovers. Faithfulness in love in this life equals gold in the life to come.
- H. **Revelation 3:18** *I (Jesus)counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;*
- I. **Immorality**- Sin had plagued the church of John's day, especially sexual sin. So too, in the generation when Jesus returns there will be sexual compromise and luteness unimaginable. The walls of righteousness will be tested beyond any other generation of humanity.
- J. **Idolatry**- (sorcery Rev. 9:21 and covetousness 1 Cor. 10:20-22; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5), enabled by false teaching on grace that did not require repentance:
  1. The "doctrine of Balaam" (**Rev. 2:14**)- The agreement to allow compromise and the "serving of two masters". It is making light of God's commands, thinking that the means justify the end! In the days ahead, many Christians will have their faith tested. Do we agree with the systems of this world or will we trust in God's miraculous provision. The American Church is more susceptible than many other nations because of our reliance on the comforts of our culture.

2. The “doctrine of the Nicolaitans” (**Rev. 2:15**)- Nicolaitia means *one who conquers and subdues the people*. The result is that we follow a system of guidelines and rules rather than being led by the voice of God.
    - a) Nicolaitanism is a belief system, like a religion or a philosophy.
    - b) Nicolaitanism results in ungodly behavior.
    - c) Christ hates it vehemently.
  3. The “doctrine of Jezebel” (**Rev. 2:24**)- Jesus made Jezebel synonymous with false doctrine. It is a doctrine which teaches that something evil can be good, that the profane can be pure. Jezebel, in Hebrew, means “*chaste, virtuous, without idolatry*”. Christians who hold to secret sin and lust embrace and become married to a false doctrine.
- K. Many in the church of John’s day were being led astray by a false gospel message. They were enabled by false teachings on grace that did not require repentance. Repentance is required in order to receive salvation. Our sin is why Jesus died so that it might be removed.

## VI. BELIEVING HIS PROMISES

- A. The beauty of God’s leadership is that He does more than instruct us in what we should say no to but declares that our close obedience and weak “yes” to Him will result in a joyful heart and eternal rewards being given to us.
- B. **Matthew 7:11** *If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*
- C. Let us not be too quick to accept a false humility in saying, “I don’t need reward. I just want Jesus.” Jesus, the Leader of the Church is teaching us that He will be issuing rewards based on our response of faithfulness in this life. There is no greater testimony before heaven than the testimony of faithfulness. Our response of faithfulness to Jesus in this life is the measure of our love we received from Him and the response to that love. This is His inheritance from us.
- D. Jesus gives the persecuted church of John’s day as well as the end-time generation church insight into rewards as being essential to equipping us to stand in pressure. Jesus promised us twenty-two eternal rewards in Revelation 2-3 and 4 accessible today.
- E. **Here is a list of all of the 26 promises and eternal rewards declared by Jesus in Revelation 2 & 3.**
  1. To eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God (**Rev. 2:7**)
  2. The crown of life (**Rev. 2:10**)
  3. Shall not be hurt by the second death (**Rev. 2:11**)
  4. Some of the hidden manna to eat (**Rev. 2:17**)
  5. A white stone (**Rev. 2:17**)
  6. On the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it (**Rev. 2:17**)
  7. Power over the nations – ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’- as Jesus also received from His Father (**Rev. 2:26-27**)
  8. The morning star (**Rev. 2:28**)
  9. Walk with Jesus in white (**Rev. 3:4**)
  10. Clothed in white garments (**Rev. 3:5**)
  11. Jesus will not blot out his name from the Book of Life (**Rev. 3:5**)
  12. Jesus will confess his name before His Father and before His angels (**Rev. 3:5**)
  13. An open door (**Rev. 3:8**) [**NOW**]
  14. Make the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie... worship before your feet (**Rev. 3:9**)

15. Make the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie... to know that I have loved you (Rev. 3:9)
  16. Jesus will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth (**Rev. 3:10**)
  17. Made a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more (**Rev. 3:12**)
  18. Jesus will write on him the name of My God (**Rev. 3:12**)
  19. Jesus will write on him the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God (**Rev. 3:12**)
  20. Jesus will write on him His new name (**Rev. 3:12**)
  21. Jesus counsels to buy gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich (**Rev. 3:18**) [**NOW**]
  22. Jesus counsels to buy white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed (**Rev. 3:18**) [**NOW**]
  23. Jesus counsels to buy and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see (**Rev. 3:18**) [**NOW**]
  24. Jesus will come in to him (**Rev. 3:20**)
  25. Jesus will dine with him, and he with Me (**Rev. 3:20**)
  26. To sit with Jesus on His throne, as He also overcame and sat down with His Father on His throne (**Rev. 3:21**)
- F. **Revelation of Jesus to Sustain & Empower Us:** Each message begins by Jesus calling attention to the specific aspect of His majesty seen in Revelation 1 that was most needed in each church's situation.
- G. **Revelation 3:17-18** *Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked(our true state)—<sup>18</sup> I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*
- H. **To the Church in America:**
1. **Because you say-** God so honors our freewill and most of the time we imagine that He is always violating our own choices. Jesus declared, "*Because you say...*" or according to your own declaration so you will live.
  2. **"I am rich"**- If we are honest, our first response today is not toward God. It is toward our resources, systems, and human ingenuity. Most of the time we secretly think, "*I don't want to bother God with my little problems because he has much bigger issues.*" Sickness= take medicine. Depression= see a Counselor. Financial Pressure= borrow money from the bank. We Have Need of Nothing! We simply do not receive from the Father because we think we are not even in need.
  3. Jesus says that we don't even know that we are "*wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.*" This probably best defines the Church in America today. We can't even see our true state! We are filled with sin and compromise, spiritual boredom, bankrupt of the riches of the Lord's glory, spiritual blindness, and our inability to have eternal impact on our culture is exposed to the rest of the world.
  4. **Buy from me gold-** I have not achieved this but I am admitting my condition before God. This is why we are crying out for revival and spiritual awakening!

**Part 4****A Call to Know the Hour Upon Us****3 PRIMARY TIME-FRAMES FOR THE END-TIME GENERATION AWAITING JESUS' RETURN**

**1<sup>ST</sup> TIME FRAME:** BEGINNING OF SORROWS/*BIRTH PANGS* (Mt. 24:4-8; Lk. 21:23, 25)

**2<sup>ND</sup> TIME FRAME:** INCREASED LABOR PANGS/*COUNTERFEIT WORLD PEACE* (first 3½ year period)

**3<sup>RD</sup> TIME FRAME:** HARD LABOR PANGS/*GREAT TRIBULATION* (final 3½ year period)

**I. COMMON LIES AGAINST KNOWING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

- A. **Lie #1:** We cannot understand End-Time Scriptures or the signs of the times. Scripture was written to be understood by all. The majority of people throughout history have been uneducated.
- B. **Lie #2:** Some think that understanding the End-Times will minimize the work of the Great Commission and the Kingdom. **Mt. 24:14** is an example of the end-time Church evangelizing all of the nations as a precursor for Christ's coming.
- C. **Lie #3:** Since we are not able to know the day or hour of Jesus' return, we should not try to know the times and seasons or the signs of the generation in which Jesus returns. The truth is that the Scripture requires those in the generation the Lord returns to know it and prepare accordingly. Jesus and Paul emphasized the know-ability of the prophetic signs of the End-Times (**Mt. 24:32-34; Lk. 21:25-29; 1 Thes. 5:1-6; 2 Thes. 2:1-11**).
- D. **Lie #4:** Every generation believed they were the last one. It is probably true that a very small number (less than 1%) in each generation believed this. In only **one generation** has the majority of God's people believed in a sustained way (for decades) that we will see Jesus' return. Some in history spoke of the End-Times when a great crisis occurred (but the emphasis was temporary). There was Millennial fervor for a short time just before 1,000 AD but it was not sustained.
- E. **Lie #5:** It will all pan out in the end. The question is how well will it pan out for you?

**II. THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PRIMARY TIME FRAME**

- A. Jesus defines a season of increased 'wars & rumors of wars', 'nation rising against nations', 'kingdom against kingdom', 'famines', 'earthquakes', as the "beginning of sorrows" or "birth pangs". (**Mt. 24:4-8; Lk. 21:23, 25**)
- B. In many ways, this season has continued from the days of Jesus' ministry and has increased in intensity. Jesus clarified that these signs were only the beginning. Just as a mother preparing to deliver a baby, the contraction start and increase until finally there is a delivery of a beautiful baby. Jesus is preparing the earth for the birthing of His kingdom to come on earth as it is in Heaven.

**III. THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PRIMARY TIME FRAME**

- A. Paul gives two signs to indicate the time of Jesus' Coming are:
  1. A great falling away from the faith of Jesus Christ
  2. The revealing of the Antichrist on the world stage to establish peace (**1 Thes. 5:3**).

- **2 Thessalonians 2:3-** *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (Jesus' Second Coming) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin (Antichrist) is revealed...*
- C. There will be a great falling away from the faith at the end of the age (**Mt. 24:9-13; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3**). A doctrine of a demon is a teaching inspired by demons.
- **1 Timothy 4:1-2-** *Now the Spirit expressly (strongly) says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup>speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron...*
- D. The second major time frame marked by scripture occurs in the first 3½ year period of a 7 year middle east peace treaty, including Israel. It begins with the Antichrist being revealed as a man of peace who solves the **“distress in the nations”** (**Mt. 24:4-8**) and then establishes a counterfeit world peace (**1 Thes. 5:3**). At this time the Harlot Babylon religion persecutes the Church (**Rev. 17:2-6**) leading to many falling away from the faith (**1 Tim. 4:1**).
- E. The last 7 years begins when the Antichrist makes a covenant with many nations bringing world peace that lasts 3½ years. When he breaks this covenant **the Great Tribulation** starts (**Dan. 9:27**).
- **1 Thessalonians 5:3-** *When they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains (Great Tribulation) upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*
- **Daniel 9:27-** *He (Antichrist) shall confirm a covenant with many (nations) for one week (7 years); but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice (in the Jerusalem Temple).*
- F. There are two (2) stages in Satan's end-time plan to be worshipped by all nations (**Rev. 13:8**). First, he will establish the Harlot Babylon worldwide religion built on the message of tolerance as a means to deceive the nations and cause Christians to fall away from the faith. Next, he will establish the Antichrist religion.
- G. The Harlot Babylon will be a counterfeit “justice” movement and religion that will masquerade as an answer to injustice as it deceives the earth by feeding the poor, meeting humanitarian needs, loving peace, and championing the dignity of humanity with no moral absolutes. The two main characteristics of the Harlot's ideology are **moral relativism** and **religious pluralism**.
- H. We can solve the earth's entire crisis (poverty, suffering, war, hunger, etc.) but millions will still go to hell for an eternity, apart from the salvation in Jesus Christ!
- I. The Harlot religion serves as a “forerunner” to prepare the nations to worship the Antichrist. **Revelation 17:1-6** graphically describes the seductive power, cruel persecution, and destruction of the Harlot Babylon's one-world religious system.
- J. The Harlot religious system will cause the nations to be drunk with her seductions that offer great benefits including humanitarian aid, unified religion (that ends war) and a prosperous world economy. The nations will get drunk, intoxicated, or filled with joy with her promises of goodness, prosperity, compassion and a theology of tolerance.
- **Revelation 17:2-** *The inhabitants of the earth were made drunk (fascinated/exhilarated) with the wine of her fornication.*
- K. The Harlot religion will have great prominence. It will be arrayed in purple (royal status) and will be respected by the elite financial leaders of the earth who will give their allegiance to her. Most of **Hollywood** will buy into this message and will give intense wealth and attention to this religion.
- **Revelation 17:4-** *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet (royalty), and adorned with gold...having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.*
- L. The Harlot will cause multitudes to be intoxicated with the blood of the saints who expose her.
- **Revelation 17:6-** *I saw the woman (Harlot Babylon), drunk with the blood of the saints...*

- She will cause great persecution and martyrdom to many Christians in the name of pursuing unity across the earth.

M. Surprisingly, the Harlot worldwide religion will be hated and destroyed by the jealousy of the ten kings that serve the Antichrist (**Rev. 17:16**). They will burn her at the beginning of the Great Tribulation (*in the middle of the last 7 years*). The Antichrist will replace her with his own Antichrist religion. The Harlot religion will be joined voluntarily. The Antichrist religion will force all to worship him with strict demand.

- **Revelation 17:12, 16-** *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings... 16 The ten horns...on the Beast will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.*

#### IV. THE 3<sup>rd</sup> PRIMARY TIME FRAME

- A. During this 3<sup>rd</sup> time frame, which is during the 3 ½ year Great Tribulation (at the end of the 7 Year Tribulation period), will be characterized by the rage of Satan, the destructive leadership of the Antichrist, all while the faithful followers of Christ will be releasing the greatest signs, wonders, and miracles in the nations leading many to salvation in Jesus Christ.
- B. This is the time frame for the rapture of the Church, as we believe scripture describes.
- **Matthew 24:22** *“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; <sup>w</sup>but for the <sup>3</sup>elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”*
  - **Acts 2:17-21** *‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. <sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’*

#### V. JESUS’ SECOND COMING: SETTING UP HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM

- A. The 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus is the ultimate prophetic theme in the End-Times (**Rev. 19:11-21; Zech. 14; 1 Thes. 4-5; Matt. 24; Lk. 21; Mk. 13**).
- B. Jesus will physically appear in the sky to all the people of the earth when He returns to permanently live on the earth. He will sit on a Throne as King and rule over all other kings (**Rev. 19:15-16**). He will establish His Kingdom on earth for 1,000 years. This is referred to as the Millennial Kingdom (millennium is Latin “mille” for a thousand).
- **Revelation 20:6** *They shall be priests of God....and shall reign with Him a 1,000 years.*
- C. Jesus will establish righteousness in every sphere of life (political, economic, educational, agricultural, family, media, arts, environment, social institutions, etc.) (**Is. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2; 110; Mt. 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 3:21**).
- D. **The Rapture of the Church** occurs as Jesus “catches up” all believers in the sky. The Rapture will not be a secret event, but a dramatic one witnessed by all believers and unbelievers and occurs at the end of the Tribulation (**1 Thes. 4:13-5:11; Rev. 11:15-18**).
- E. Jesus will appear in the sky with the clouds and will be blazing with fire. He will tour the entire earth, slow enough for “every eye to see Him” and for many hearts to grieve as they see Him.

- F. **Matthew 24:30-31** *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* <sup>31</sup> *And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*
- G. **1 Corinthians 15:52** *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*
- H. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* <sup>17</sup> *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*
- I. The Church will go through the Tribulation in victory and great power. The timing of the Rapture is an instantaneous moment as Jesus tours the Earth preparing us for the final days of His judgment. We must honor the godliness and wisdom of many who hold the pre-tribulation Rapture view, but see it as a serious mistake that will leave many unprepared for the great pressure that is surely coming.
- J. We are not to be afraid of the Antichrist and the last days. Jesus is so much more powerful that it will not even be a contest. Jesus created the heavens and the earth in Gen. 1. We win and it will be worth all the effort and sacrifice of what is required. Jesus is leading all of the end-time events with the intimate partnership of His Bride who says YES today and each day!
- K. The reason why we have a fear of hardship, persecution, death, etc. is because we do not fear God. As God begins to take His rightful place in our heart the Church of Jesus Christ will be empowered to stand in the most difficult of times. To “fear” is to give an elevated place of honor and respect. When we fear death or hardship we are actually giving these things a place of honor and respect.
- L. **Matthew 10:28** *“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

**Part 5****“The Millennial Reign of Christ”**

**REVIEW:** Last week we discussed that it is our best understanding of the return of Christ Jesus in the Rapture appearing will be during the Great Tribulation. It is our understanding that Jesus will prepare His faithful Church on the earth to rule and release His will even through the 3 ½ years of judgment on the Anti-Christ government. Though the rage of Satan will intensify like no other time in human history, the Church will walk victoriously and overcome *“by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and even counting their life worth nothing to them.”* The majority of Church history supports this theological viewpoint of Believers on the earth going through the Great Tribulation and releasing God’s end-time judgments as other times in Biblical history. There should not be fear in this season but confidence and comfort knowing that God is coming with rescue and reward for those that wait for Him.

**Here are the Primary Views held for the Rapture:**

1. **Amillennialists** believe that God's promises regarding the end times are figurative and will not be literally fulfilled, particularly the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth.
- **Pre-millennialists** believe that Jesus Christ will return to the earth prior to His literal reign on the earth for 1000 years. Three groups of pre-millennialists include the following:

2. **Post-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will not occur until the end of the seven year tribulation, just prior to the beginning of the millennial kingdom.
3. **Mid-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will occur three and one half years into the tribulation, at beginning of the three and one half year great tribulation.
4. **Pre-tribulationists** believe that the rapture will occur prior to the seven year tribulation, but not necessarily immediately before the tribulation.

**Matthew 6:9-10** *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. <sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

**Revelation 20:4-6** *And I saw thrones, and they (human leadership) sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death (after the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection) has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*

## I. HEAVEN & EARTH BROUGHT TOGETHER

- A. It has always been in the Heavenly Father's heart to live and dwell on the earth with His Sons & Daughters forever. The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to establish His kingdom over all the earth and **join** the heavenly and earthly realms together.
- B. **Ephesians 1:9-10** <sup>9</sup>*having made known to us the mystery of His will...<sup>10</sup> that He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.*
- C. **Revelation 21:3** *Behold, the tabernacle of God (the place of His dwelling/His home) is with men, and He will dwell (live) with them.*
- D. When Jesus rules from the earth, the natural human processes will not be suspended, but will be significantly enhanced by the Holy Spirit. Heaven and Earth will operate physically/spiritually in fullness. We see an example of the natural and the supernatural dimensions operating together when Jesus appeared in His resurrected body to teach the apostles for forty days.
- E. **Luke 24:39-43** <sup>39</sup>*Behold My hands and feet...handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have..."<sup>41</sup>He said to them, "Have you any food here?"<sup>42</sup>So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish..."<sup>43</sup>And He took it and ate in their presence.*
- F. In the same manner that Adam and Eve opened the door to sin and disobedience bringing destruction to all of creation, at Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming the earth will begin its restoration process. This will be a process as each one of us partner with Jesus to fulfill His Kingdom's rule on the earth fully. The earth will eventually be restored to Eden's original state and then exceed beyond our imagination.
- G. **Daniel 7:13-14, 27** <sup>13</sup>*...One like the Son of Man (Jesus) coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days (Father)...<sup>14</sup>To Him (Jesus) was given...a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him..."<sup>27</sup>The kingdom...shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.*
- H. Jesus will rule in partnership with resurrected saints. We will be entrusted with His Kingdom's resources and authority, according to our obedience in this age.
  - **Revelation 2:20** *And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.*

- **Revelation 3:21** *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*
- **Matthew 25:23** *His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'*
- **Luke 19:17** *And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'*

- I. There will be three (3) categories of people living before the start of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.
  1. **Christ-Followers**- They will be the ones who were raptured in the air and transformed "*in the twinkling of an eye*" to be given new glorified bodies (**1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Jn. 3:2**)
  2. **Antichrist-Followers**- There will be many followers and worshippers of Satan who will survive the Great Tribulation. During Jesus' reign on the earth, He will search them out and execute them as their final judgment (**Rev. 19:20-21**).
  3. **Self-Followers**- There will be those who did not accept Christ's gift of salvation, nor did they follow the Anti-Christ's rule. They can still be saved in the millennial reign of Christ. These were the resisters who stood against evil governments, even without faith in God (Zech. 12:10-14; Jer. 31:2; Ezek. 20:38-42)

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

### A. How long is the Millennial Reign?

1. The duration of this kingdom will be one millennium. Revelation 20:1-10 reveals the time frame not just once but six times that it will last one thousand (1,000) years. Satan will be bound during this time, which will remove all deception.

### B. How will human life be affected or changed?

1. We see a great increase in life spans. It will be common for most people (without a glorified body) to live one hundred plus years as normal.
2. **Isa. 65:20** *"No longer will babies die when only a few days old. No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life. No longer will people be considered old at one hundred! Only the cursed will die that young!"*

### C. What will happen to nature and the entire animal and plant life?

1. Peace will be established between the animal and human kingdom. First of all, we see that animals that are presently carnivorous will begin to eat plants only, so that the animals will not fear one another or harm people.
2. **Isa. 11:6-8** *In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat. The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion, and a little child will lead them all. <sup>7</sup>The cow will graze near the bear. The cub and the calf will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like a cow. <sup>8</sup>The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.*

### D. What will Christ's leadership look like?

1. Jesus will reign as a literal king on a throne, dwelling in Jerusalem. He will do so in all wisdom and perfect justice, with a rod of iron.
2. **Rev. 19:15** *And He (Jesus) Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*
3. **Ps. 89:14** *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.*

4. Jesus will also work to restore the judges to Israel. These judges and counselors will issue decrees and laws from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
5. **Isa. 1:26** *"I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."*

**E. What will be Israel and the Jewish people's role be?**

1. Jesus will reestablish Jerusalem and her people, the Jews, to her original place of honor before the nations so that they can declare the high praises of God.
2. **Zech. 8:22-23** *Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.'<sup>23</sup> "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."*

**F. Will we gather together around Christ's government capital in Jerusalem?**

1. The Feast of Tabernacles was a time of joyous celebration as the Israelites celebrated God's continued provision for them in the current harvest and remembered His provision and protection during the 40 years in the wilderness. This will be one primary celebration continued through the millennial reign of Christ.
2. **Zech. 14:16-18** *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.<sup>17</sup> And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King...there will be no rain.<sup>18</sup> If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.*

**Part 6**

**"The Great & Terrible Day of the Lord"**

**Acts 2:17-21** *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.<sup>18</sup> And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.<sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.'*

**I. IT SHALL COME TO PASS**

- A. **Acts 2:17** *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*
- B. The context of the receiving of the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, is that Jesus had been meeting with His followers for 40 days prior to His ascension to Heaven. After Jesus ascended to Heaven, 120 followers of Jesus, including the disciples and the mother and family of Jesus continued to meet continually for prayer and fellowship. They were probably meeting in the same "upper room" where the disciples had the last supper before He was crucified.

- C. This Promise was declared by the Heavenly Father over 800 yrs. prior fulfillment. This was only to be the down payment of many more outpourings of Holy Spirit to come. So the question is, is God true and will He always do what He says?
- D. Many of us question God's involvement in our circumstances and the circumstances of others saying, "Why doesn't God work?" There is coming a day when God will send Jesus to the planet to fulfill His works with great power and authority. In that hour many will then say, "Why does God have to work so drastically like this?" Regardless of how and when, God is still God and He can be trusted forever. PERIOD!
- E. Jesus carefully instructed His disciples and followers not to neglect gathering together regularly for prayer, fellowship, and for the fulfillment of the Father's Promise; Holy Spirit to come upon them with power to enable them to fulfill all of Jesus' works.
- F. **Luke 24:49** *Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry (wait) in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*
- G. The prophet Joel calls them to repentance, and promises this gift of the Spirit as the great blessing of a far-off future. He had been taught that no true knowledge of God comes but through God's Spirit.
- H. Elisha prayed and asked Elijah that a double portion inheritance would be passed on to him, according to the Jewish tradition of giving the eldest son's inheritance, so too we ask the Father for a double portion of the Holy Spirit in our day before Jesus' coming.
- I. **I will pour out My Spirit-** This was to be a new expression of God's activity among men. No longer would God be limited to dwelling on a mountain, or walking among them in the Person of Jesus, as great as these are, but would now be God IN them by the Holy Spirit of God. The burning of Moses would now burn on the inside of Followers of Christ Jesus.
- J. **On All Flesh-** This Promise would be available to any and all who asked. No matter the background, financial status, region on the earth, etc.

## II. YOU SHALL PROPHECY

- A. To prophesy has a few implications and expression in the Bible. Here a few:
  1. To predict or foretell future events (**Mt. 11:13; Mt. 15:7**)
  2. To conjecture, to declare as a prophet might (**Mt. 26:68**)
  3. To celebrate the praises of God, being under a divine influence, to declare God's Word with songs, hymns, & spiritual songs (**Lk. 1:67; 1 Sam. 10:5; 19:20**)
  4. To teach the doctrines of religion and the Word of God (**Mt. 7:22**)

## III. YOU SHALL RECEIVE DREAMS & VISIONS

- A. **Acts 2:17** *"...Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams."*
- B. One of the fruits and gifts of Holy Spirit's outpouring would be our ability to see what God sees and hear what God speaks. God desires to share His secrets with those He can trust and who are interested in listening.
- C. **Amos 3:7** *"Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."*
- D. **Psalms 25:14** *"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."*
- E. **Psalms 25:14** *"God-friendship is for God-worshippers; they are the ones he confides in."* (The Message)
- F. Some read this verse and instantly count themselves out saying, "I am not a prophet so God doesn't speak to me in any significant way." The truth is that the Father desires that we would all prophesy and hear His voice and now His thoughts and plans. After all, we are His sons and daughters and the Bride of His only begotten first-born Son.

G. **1 Corinthians 14:5** *I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.*

H. **Visions-** The name "Seer" was first name given to that class of men who regularly discerned God's will and purposes, and was later "Prophet". This is the description of those who would be given the ability to "see visions". (**Dan. 2:28; Dan. 7:1-2, Dan. 7:15; Dan. 8:2; Ezek. 11:24; Gen. 15:1; Num. 12:6; Job 4:13; Job 7:14; Ezek. 1:1; Ezek. 8:3**)

I. **Dreams-** As this was one way in which the will of God was made known formerly to people, so too Holy Spirit would continue to confirm and reveal the Father's will in the life of individual Believers and corporate Body.

J. **\*NOTE:** We do not define our Christian experience simply on dreams or visions but on the eternal Word of God. Having said this, we believe that the Father will reveal His person and His plans to us.

#### IV. **WONDERS IN THE HEAVENS & SIGNS ON THE EARTH**

A. **Acts 2:19-20** *I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. <sup>20</sup>*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.**

B. **Wonders & Signs-** Literally, "I will give signs"

1. God will display visible wonders in the heavens or in the sky as a sign of His Son's return to the earth. These wonders will in both in the earth's atmosphere and in the cosmos of space.

2. God will demonstrate His power by performing signs in the earth. These signs will be seen in nature and through the righteous supernatural works of the Saints.

C. **Blood-** Blood is commonly used as a description of battle, war, and intentional suffering.

D. **Fire-** Fire is also an image of war. This description of fire could also be as a result of the "wonders in the heavens" or "signs in the earth".

E. **Vapor of Smoke-** This is a reference to rising pillars of smoke, and is another image of the calamities of war the smoke rising from burning towns. It was common in war to burn the towns of an enemy, and to render him as helpless as possible.

#### V. **BEFORE THE GREAT & TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD**

A. **Acts 2:20** *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.*

B. The "Day of the Lord" will be glorious, beyond our human imagination. There are a couple different understandings of when this day is. There is the reference of the season of preparation of when the Lord Jesus prepares to return to earth and releases signs and wonders. This will be the times and seasons, primarily in one single generation. Then there is the specific Day of the Lord when Jesus Christ is on the earth to conquer evil and set up His throne in Jerusalem.

C. The Day of the Lord has been in the burning heart of the Trinity before Creation began It is the promised inheritance of the Father to His Eternal Son. This WILL NOT be a secret day! Jesus has been waiting for a few thousand years and has only whispered to the hearts of humanity. On that day He will thunder as He releases His jealous zeal for His precious Bride on the earth.

D. In the Old Testament the expression "*day of the Lord*" phrase occurs eighteen (18) times, most often in the books of Joel and Zephaniah.

**VI. DEFINITION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD**

- A. One of the prominent themes by the Old and New Testament prophets is the Day of the Lord. It is also referred to as “that day” or “the great day.” The phrase “Day of the Lord” or phrases that speak of it, such as “the Day” or “the great Day” are found in Scripture nearly 100 times. These phrases are in the Old Testament approximately 80 times.
- B. It is “His Day” because He displays His sovereign leadership for all to see. God’s normal mode of leadership over the earth is to patiently restrain His greater judgments against sin (**2 Pet. 3:9; Eccl. 8:11**). Rarely has God altered His usual mode of operation by breaking into the natural realm to confront rebellion openly on a large scale. These demonstrations of His zeal will be seen in both revival and the release of the judgments of God, Great & Terrible.
- C. This day indicates a unique time frame when God acts with unusual manifestations of power for His people and against His enemies. This is a time when God manifests Himself as the Warrior-King going to war against sin, as He decisively intervenes against His enemy. The Warrior-King openly battles against oppressors of His people as He delivers and vindicates them. His power will be unrestrained.

**VII. SALVATION TO ALL WHO CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**

- A. **Acts 2:21** *“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved.”*
- B. In the midst of these wonders and dangers, whosoever should call on the Lord should be saved from sin, protected and kept from His judgments, and ultimately delivered into eternity with Him.
- C. We are comforted to know that God’s judgments on the earth are on sin and evil. God is not releasing judgment on His sons & daughters but on Satan and his worshippers and followers.
- D. It is important to note that the greatest promise of salvation, revival, and spiritual awakening is also in the context of history’s greatest crisis.