

Introduction to Prophecy

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Introduction:

The world is filled with fortunetellers, seers and mystics who pander to man's interest in the future. Some are nothing more than frauds; some follow the occult to predict or attempt to influence future events. Interest in astrology today drives an ever-increasing curiosity in eastern mystical beliefs, much of which are the works of the devil to subvert minds from the truth about God's plan and purpose in the ages to come. The Bible condemns such satanic practices:

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.
(Deuteronomy 18: 10-12)

The future belongs to *God alone*, and it has been written in advance by the men whom He chose:

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1: 21)

The Bible is a *supernatural book*. It is much more than a collection of religious principles; it is God's living word, speaking to the very heart of man:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4: 12)

That the Bible is uniquely different from all other religious writings is demonstrated by its distinctive *prophetic* message. While others follow the philosophies of men now dead and silent, Christians have in the Bible alone, God's divine revelation of His plan and purpose for the ages. This *prophetic character* of the Bible attracts attention. Men often derive solace from philosophy, but when troubled hearts question the future, only the Scriptures can give the answers. And rightly so, for God's purpose in prophecy is to prepare man for eternity!

1. Bible Prophecy . . . What Is It? :

Prophecy is God's revelation of divine will and purpose exercised in events yet future. The Bible is estimated to be *two-thirds* prophecy! Some passages reveal events *immediately future* to the writing and are said to be *near* prophecies. Others deal with events at the close of world history and are called *far*, or *end-time* prophecies. Some Scriptures have both a *near*, and a *far* prophetic meaning.

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The theological term for studying end-time prophecy is called *Eschatology*. This chapter is not an in-depth treatise on Eschatology, but a brief Biblical introduction to the chronology of events surrounding the second-coming of Jesus Christ and the close of the ages.

A. Why Christians **Believe Bible Prophecy**:

1. Because God **Says So**:

The believer's faith in Bible prophecy does not rest merely upon its reliability or accuracy, but simply because *God said it!*

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. (Isaiah 46: 9-10)

2. Because History Is **Fulfilled Prophecy**:

The literal fulfillment of past prophecy, unimpeachably proven and recorded in history, is evident testimony to the infallibility of end-time prophecy. The absolute accuracy of Bible prophecy compels honest men to admit to its truthfulness. For example, Isaiah prophesied in 712 B.C., concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem, even naming the Persian King Cyrus, who would order it:

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isaiah 44: 28)

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. (Isaiah 45: 4)

The prophecies of Isaiah, along with that of Jeremiah (Jer. 25: 12), were *literally fulfilled* in 536 B.C., 176 years *after* they were spoken!

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. (Ezra 1: 1-2)

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3. Christians Believe Bible Prophecy Because God **Cannot Lie!** :

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. (Titus 1: 2)

B. The **Purpose** of Bible Prophecy:

1. Bible Prophecy **Imparts Confidence** in the Scriptures:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1: 19-21)

Bible Prophecy Is an **Encouragement to Holiness:**

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. (2 Peter 3: 11)

Bible Prophecy Is **Assurance of Christ's Return:**

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-4)

2. Bible Prophecy Is a **Warning of Impending Danger:**

Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3: 3-4, 7)

Bible Prophecy Is an **Invitation to Repent:**

To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation. (Psalms 95: 7-8)

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Bible Prophecy Means **Trouble for the World**, Both from the Devil, and from God:

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12: 12)

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. (Revelation 16: 1)

3. Bible Prophecy Means **Future Blessing for Israel**:

Bible prophecy constantly reaffirms God's covenant promises to reestablish Israel after the tribulation, which is known to them as the *time of Jacob's trouble*. (Jeremiah 30: 7)

4. Bible Prophecy Means **Victory for the Church**:

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5: 27)

5. Bible Prophecy Means **Defeat for the Devil**:

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20: 10)

2. The Role of God's Prophets:

A. The Prophets Spoke an **Authorized Message**:

Prophecy with the **Divine** Signature... "**Thus Saith the Lord**":

I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 2: 4)

The **Vindication** of a **True Prophet**:

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18: 22)

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B. The Prophets Have **Finished Their Task**:

But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail (cease). (1 Corinthians 13: 8)

All Bible Prophecy **Has Been Declared**:

With the finalization of the canon of Scriptures (1 Corinthians 13: 8-10), God closed Bible prophecy. There will be no *new revelations* from God! It has been observed that Christians should follow the old adage; "if it's new, it's probably not true; and if it's true, then it is certainly not new."

God's **Perfect Word** Is Complete:

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Corinthians 13: 10)

From that word *perfect*, comes the English word used to describe the *plenary inspiration* of the Scriptures; that is, the Bible is the complete and final Word of God. Nothing has been omitted or lost; nothing remains to be revealed.

C. There Are **No More Holy Prophets**:

There Are Many **False Prophets**:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2 Peter 2: 1)

The **Impact of False Prophecy** upon the Unsaved:

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (2 Peter 2: 2)

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Timothy 4: 3-4)

3. Eschatology... The Doctrine of Last Things:

A. Where the World Stands **Prophetically Today**:

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1. Which Bible prophecy **Was Last Fulfilled?** :

The **Restoration of Israel** to its Land, May 1948:

And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God. (Amos 9: 14-15)

Jerusalem **Reunited with Israel**, June 1967:

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21: 24)

2. What Event Appears Next, Prophetically?... **Christ's Second-coming:**

Bible prophecy reveals two distinct *phases*, or *advents* of Christ's second-coming, the first advent being the rapture of the church:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4: 16-17)

The rapture (literally, "catching away"), of the New Testament church is described in Bible prophecy as being *pre-tribulation* (prior to the start of the tribulation); and *pre-millennial* (before Christ establishes His earthly kingdom.) Christ's *second advent* is His revelation in power and great glory:

For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24: 27, 30)

At His *second advent* Christ will establish His *millennial kingdom* upon earth. Compare the following distinctions between the first and second advents of His coming:

First Advent... Christ Comes **in the Clouds:**

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Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4: 17)

Second Advent... Christ Returns to the Earth:

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. (Zechariah 14: 4)

First Advent... Christ Returns as a "Thief":

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5: 2)

Second Advent... Every Eye Shall See Him:

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him. (Revelation 1: 7)

First Advent... Christ Returns "For" His Saints:

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14: 3)

Second Advent... Christ Returns "With" His Saints:

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. (Jude 14)

First Advent... Christ Returns to Heaven:

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven; Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19: 1, 7)

Second Advent... Christ Establishes His Earthly Kingdom:

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron... And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 19: 15, 20: 4)

3. Prophetic **Signs** of Christ's **Soon Return**:

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Worldwide Religious **Apostasy**:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

(1 Timothy 4: 1)

The **Rapid Growth** of Religious **Cults**:

There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them... And many shall follow their pernicious ways. (2 Peter 2: 1-2)

Declension into **Pagan Idolatry**:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 3: 1-5, 7)

Increase in **Gross Immorality**:

For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matthew 24: 38-39)

The Appearance of **Many False Christs**:

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Matthew 24: 5)

International **Political Upheaval**:

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. (Matthew 24: 6-7)

And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity. (Luke 21: 25)

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B. A Chronology of **Future Prophecy**:

Beginning immediately after the rapture of the church, the following is a brief outline of the major events surrounding the *second-coming of Christ* and the close of the ages:

1. Bible Prophecy Relating to **Events in Heaven**:

The **Judgement Seat** of Christ:

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (Revelation 22: 12)

For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Romans 14: 10, 12)

The judgement seat of Christ follows *immediately after* the rapture. It includes *all saints*; not just a select few, or a certain denomination, but *every* born-again child of God!

The **Type** of Judgement . . . "**Bema**" (Greek: "Reward"):

The *Bema* judgement is not to determine one's *salvation*, or *destiny* (only believers will be there!); but rather to *reward the motive* for Christian service:

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Corinthians 3: 13-15)

The **Nature** of the **Reward**:

Although the text above does not elaborate on the nature of the rewards, the New Testament Scriptures do list *five "crowns"* to be given believers for faithful Christian service. Are the crowns *literal adornments* for the head? Again, the Scriptures do not elaborate. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost believed them to be *special endowments* of ability to praise *God*. Whatever they are, the crowns are surely to be sought from a pure heart, to be cast at the feet of Jesus!

The **Crown of Life**:

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. (James 1: 12)

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Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
(Revelation 2: 10)

The *Crown of Life* is awarded to those who patiently and faithfully endure temptation; and to those who give their life for Christ.

The **Crown of Glory:**

Feed the flock of God which is among you... And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.
(1 Peter 5: 2, 4)

The *Crown of Glory* is awarded to those pastors who faithfully and humbly preach God's word and care for the church.

The **Crown of Rejoicing:**

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? (1 Thessalonians 2: 19)

The *Crown of Rejoicing* is awarded to the soul-winner for leading others to Jesus Christ.

The **Crown of Righteousness:**

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (2 Timothy 4: 8)

The *Crown of Righteousness* is awarded to those who love and long for the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The **Incorruptible Crown:**

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. (1 Corinthians 9: 24-25)

The *Incorruptible Crown* is awarded to those who faithfully run the race of Christian Discipleship, giving up self for the cause of Christ.

The **Marriage of the Lamb:**

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was

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granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19: 7-8)

The *Marriage of the Lamb* begins after the judgement seat of Christ, and concludes with the second-coming of Christ in power and great glory. The events of the marriage are:

The **Presentation of the Bride:**

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.
(2 Corinthians 11: 2)

The **Marriage Ceremony:**

The private marriage ceremony is celebrated, not to honor the bride, but the **Lamb!** It was as a lamb that Christ *purchased the bride* (the church), with His own blood; therefore, the ceremony signifies a perfected, completed bride being united with the One to whom it is espoused.

The **Marriage Supper:**

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19: 9)

The *Marriage Supper* occurs on the eve of the Lord's second advent. It is heaven's celebration of the Lamb's wedding (read Revelation 19: 11-16).

2. Bible Prophecy Relating to **Events on Earth:**

While events in heaven occupy the saints of God, fulfillment of Bible prophecy is bringing the inhabitants of the earth into the tribulation; the rise to power of the *Antichrist*, and the outpouring of *God's* wrath:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be

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with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.
(Daniel 9: 24-27)

Daniel's vision is that of Israel under *Gentile world dominion*, ending in the *Great Tribulation*. The *Seventy Weeks* prophecy foretells world history in four distinct periods. The **weeks**, as fulfilled prophecy confirms, are literally *weeks* of seven years each:

First Period... Seven *Weeks* (49 Years):

From the commandment given Ezra (Ezra 1: 1-3), to restore Jerusalem, to its *literal fulfillment*, was 49 years!

Second Period... Sixty-two *Weeks* (434 Years):

From the restoration of Jerusalem to the appearance of Christ the Messiah was 434 years, literally as prophesied!

Third Period... An Unspecified Interval (Daniel 9: 26)

Between the crucifixion of Christ and the final *week* of Daniel's prophecy is a time of indeterminate length, known to believers as the *church age*, or the gathering of a Gentile bride for Christ's name (Acts 15: 13-17). This "divine time-out" has lasted from the cross, and will close at the rapture.

Fourth Period... One *Week* (7 Years):

Daniel's *seventieth-week* prophecy is that of the *tribulation*; beginning after the rapture of the church, and closing at the second-coming of Christ in glory. It is divided in the middle by a terrible ungodly act of the Antichrist; the last three and one-half years (Daniel 12: 11), being known as *great tribulation* (Matthew 24: 15-21, Revelation 13: 5).

A detailed commentary here on the *tribulation* and related events is not possible due to the obvious limitations of time and space. What follows is a brief outline suggesting the chronological sequence of prophetic events to come, with Scripture references for further study:

Tribulation . . . The First Three and One-half Years:

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The **Antichrist** Revealed:

Occurs immediately after the rapture:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition... For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (2 Thessalonians 2: 3-4, 7-8)

The Rise to Power of the "**Beast**":

Revival of the Roman Empire... Political Babylon:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Revelation 13: 1-2)

The Unveiling of the **False Prophet**:

The "unholy spirit" (see Revelation 19: 20) of the satanic trinity:

And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13: 11-12)

The "**Mother of Harlots**" Vision:

The ecumenical gathering of apostate world religions into the harlot church - *Religious Babylon*:

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and

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decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17: 1-6)

The First "Seal" Judgement:

The Antichrist begins a sweeping *bloodless conquest* of world powers:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6: 1-2)

Temple Worship Re-instituted in Jerusalem:

A *peace treaty* is signed between Antichrist and Israel:

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9: 26-27)

A Massive **Worldwide Return** of the Jews to Israel:

Is this Ezekiel's "**Dry Bones**" vision?

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest... Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus

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saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. (Ezekiel. 37: 1-3, 11-12)

Israel **Invaded** from the North:

Gog and Magog (Russia), allied with Persia (Iran), Libya, Ethiopia, Gomer (Germany), and Togarmah (Turkey), conspire to attack Israel:

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (Ezekiel 38: 2-6, 39: 1-12)

The Second "**Seal**" **Judgement**:

Peace is taken from the earth:

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

The "**Abomination of Desolation**":

The Antichrist breaks his pact with Israel:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) (Matthew 24: 15)

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

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overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9: 27)

Desolation of the "**Great Whore**":

The Harlot Church, *Religious Babylon* is destroyed:

And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17: 15-18)

"Great" Tribulation . . . The Last Three and One-half Years:

Persecution and Flight of Israel:

An *Israelite Remnant* flees into the wilderness:

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12: 5-6... read also Hosea. 2: 14-15, Matthew 24: 15-22)

The **SEALING** of the **144,000**:

Virgin men (12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, see Revelation 7: 4-8), chosen as **Jewish missionaries**:

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads... These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14: 1, 4)

God's **Two Witnesses**:

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The awesome power demonstrated by these two heavenly visitors plagues the dominion of the Antichrist for 42 months:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth... These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. (Revelation 11: 3, 6)

A Vision of **Gentile Multitudes Saved** During the Tribulation:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands... And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7: 9, 13-14)

Although *many will be saved* during the tribulation, *not one soul* will be saved, who, during the church age, heard the gospel and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2: 9-12)

The Third "**Seal**" **Judgement**:

Famine strikes the food supplies for the *working class*:

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. (Revelation 6: 5-6)

The "**Mark of the Beast**":

The "seal of doom" is forced upon the *inhabiters* (Unsaved) *of the earth*:

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And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13: 16-18)

The Fourth "Seal" Judgement:

The *plagues of death* come upon the earth:

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6: 7-8)

The Fifth "Seal" Judgement:

A vision of martyred *tribulation saints* in heaven:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6: 9-11)

The Sixth "Seal" Judgement:

The consummation of God's *terrible wrath* begins:

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelation 6: 12-17)

The seventh "SEAL" JUDGEMENT:

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Heaven stands aghast; The seven *trumpet judgments* follow:

The First "Trumpet" Judgement:

Hail and fire mingled with blood falls from heaven:

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. (Revelation 8: 7)

The Second "Trumpet" Judgement:

A great mountain is cast, burning, into the sea:

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8: 8-9)

The Third "Trumpet" Judgement:

The great star *Wormwood* falls from heaven:

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. (Revelation 8: 10-11)

The Fourth "Trumpet" Judgement:

The sun, moon and stars are darkened; three "woes" are announced:

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Revelation 8: 12-13)

The Fifth "Trumpet" Judgement:

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The first *woe* pronounced; a five month *plague of locusts*:

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

(Revelation 9: 2-4... read also verses 1, 5-12)

The Sixth "**Trumpet**" Judgement:

The second *woe* pronounced; a military invasion of 200 million!

And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. (Revelation 9:17-18)

(Read also verses 13-16, 19-21, Revelation 11: 13-14)

The Seventh "**Trumpet**" Judgement:

The third *woe* pronounced: heaven announces the doom of Antichrist and *political Babylon*. The final judgments of the great tribulation follow, as the full fury of God's wrath is poured out in the seven *vial judgments*:

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 11: 15)

The First "**Vial**" Judgement:

A plague upon those who have received the *mark of the Beast*:

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. (Revelation 16: 2)

The Second "**Vial**" Judgement:

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The sea *turned into blood*, killing every living creature in it:

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

(Revelation 16: 3)

The Third "Vial" Judgement:

The rivers and fountains of water *turned into blood*:

And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

(Revelation 16: 4-6)

The Fourth "Vial" Judgement:

The sun's intensity increased to *scorch men with fire*:

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. (Revelation 16: 8-9)

The Fifth "Vial" Judgement:

Darkness and tormenting pain inflicted upon the Antichrist and his kingdom:

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (Revelation 16: 10-11)

The Sixth "Vial" Judgement:

The Euphrates River *dried up*, preparing the gathering of the earth's great armies for the *Battle of Armageddon*:

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16: 13, 16)

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The Seventh "Vial" Judgement:

An earthquake and exceeding great hailstones destroy political Babylon:

And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. (Revelation 16: 17-21)

The **Second-coming of Christ** in Power and Great Glory:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Revelation 19: 11-13, 15-16)

The *armies* returning with Christ? The *saints* of the *church*, His *bride*!:

And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (Revelation 19: 14)

The **Battle of Armageddon**:

The armies of the earth **utterly destroyed**:

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19: 19, 21)

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Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.
(Zechariah 14: 1-3)

The Damnation of the Enemies of God:

The antichrist and false prophet cast alive into a *lake of fire* burning with brimstone:

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

The Devil's Exile:

Satan bound for one thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit:

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

The Triumph of the Tribulation Saints:

The *bodily resurrection* and *judgement seat* for those saved and martyred during the tribulation:

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

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3. The **Millennial Reign of Christ**:

One-thousand years of *universal righteousness* upon the earth:

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

(Read also Isaiah 35: 1-10, Jeremiah 23: 5-6, Zechariah 14: 9-11, Acts 1: 9-11)

4. The **Final Revolt and Doom of Satan** (Revelation 20: 3, 7-10):

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season... And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10)

At the close of the millennium the devil shall be *loosed a little season* (vs. 3). Believers are often puzzled by this statement. "Why turn him loose again? Just leave him there!" The divine intent, however, yields readily to *Scriptural reasoning* (Isaiah 1: 18.) Man claims that human nature is basically good and that sin is merely the result of a *bad* environment. God demonstrates the error of such a belief; for a thousand years many on earth who survived the tribulation will live in a perfect environment. Though the very influence of evil is removed and they enjoy the blessings of Christ's reign, countless multitudes will not repent, and when tempted by the devil will revolt against God! (vs. 8). This *loosing*, then, is to permit all an opportunity of choice freely between heaven and hell... sadly, a great number will choose wrongly!

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C. The **Great White Throne Judgement** of God:

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

1. The **Resurrection of the "Dead"**:

All the unsaved from all ages in the earth stand before God:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Revelation 20: 12)

2. The **Judgement** Against Their "**Works**":

"Degrees" of punishment?:

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (Revelation 20: 13)

3. The Eternal **Doom** of the **Unsaved**:

Eternal Death (separation forever) in the Lake of Fire:

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20: 14-15)

D. The **New Heaven** and the **New Earth**:

1. The Beginning of the *Eternal Ages*:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (Revelation 21: 1)
(Read also Isaiah 65: 17, 66: 22)

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2. God Makes **All Things New**:

The *Old Heaven and Earth* are passed away:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3: 10-13)

E. The "**Prepared Place**":

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14: 1-6)

The *Holy City*, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven:

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21: 2-3)

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as

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large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.
(Revelation 21: 10-16)

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22: 1-5)

The *Holy City* is our Lord's gift to His bride, the church. It's divine splendor is described in this chapter; every believer who has said "I can't imagine how beautiful Heaven must really be" should read Revelation 21. Just how big is this glorious city? Converting furlongs to miles equals an area *roughly* 1500 miles by 1500 miles by 1500 miles. The *Holy City* is *foursquare*, a cube. That would approximate the distance from Miami, Florida, to Montreal, Canada, over to Calgary, Canada, then down to El Paso, Texas, and back to Miami; which is merely surface area - New Jerusalem will be as tall as it is in breadth!

Most anthropologists think that throughout human history a total of about 40 billion people have lived. To appreciate the size of the *Holy City*, consider that an estimated 25% of that total number, or 10 billion people (*the actual number is known only to God*), have been saved and will be in Heaven. How crowded will this city be? First, reduce the actual living space by 50% to accommodate streets, buildings and other infrastructure; if every person, in his own place, had an equal inheritance (*unlikely, due to the nature of the rewards*), each of the 10 billion residents would have an area of 200 acres in front, 200 acres behind, 200 acres left, 200 acres right, 200 acres above, and 200 acres beneath. That's a **big city!**

The glory of that city will not be measured just by its size, or by the golden streets, precious gems, or even by the apostles and notables from Christianity through the ages, but because it is where the Lord Jesus Christ will dwell with His people. From the hymn of Charles J. Butler, 1898, come the words that say it best:

"In cottage, or mansion fair, Where Jesus is, 'tis Heaven there"