

## **THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES**

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"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh ... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" - Luke 21:20, 24. Jesus uttered these words shortly before He was crucified. In the same chapter, it is written that He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in 70 A.D. He also told them of severe persecutions and great distress in the land and of the Jews' dispersion among the nations, and added, "But the end is not by and by"; that is, the end of the troubles would not be immediately - Luke 21:9 Revised Version.

"The times of the Gentiles" is a period in history which we wish to consider especially. An important question arises, which should interest every one of us: When will "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"? The answer generally given is that they will be fulfilled at the end of the last week (or seven years) of Daniel, when Christ will be revealed to His people the Jews. That cannot be correct, for it cripples a clear understanding of Scriptures related thereto. We herein give a number of Scriptural and logical objections to that view, and beg the Bible student to consider them carefully. We also venture to give the correct answer to the question.

"THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES" (Romans 11:25) must not be confounded with "the times of the Gentiles." The former is entirely RELIGIOUS and began when Peter preached in the house of Cornelius (A.D. 43), and "God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" - Acts 11:18. Then and there God began to "visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name" - Acts 15:7, 14. This continues to this day, and will end when Christ will arise to deliver the Jews. Then "there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" - Romans 11:25, 26. The whole time of taking out "a people for His Name" will be about nineteen hundred years. "THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES" are NATIONAL, and began in 606 B. C. when Nebuchadnezzar became king of the Babylonian Empire. God counted him the first world ruler of the first of four world empires. See Daniel seven. Because of Israel's disobedience to God, He took away their national liberty and made them subject to the nations with which they were flirting. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Jerusalem, "and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" - Daniel 1:1, 2. That was the beginning of Gentile dominion, or "the times of the Gentiles." Jehovah had warned His people against departing from Him, saying, "They that hate you shall reign over you." Four times in Leviticus twenty six, He declares the duration of that chastisement and dominion to be "seven times" is seven years. Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from his kingly office and lived in the fields like an ox for "seven times" or seven years - Daniel 4:16, 23. Study Revelation 12:6, 14. The 1260 days in verse six are expressed in verse fourteen as "a time (360) and times (twice 360) and half a time (180)." Twice 1260 is 2520.

### **YEAR-DAY COUNTING**

The Bible frequently gives prophetic value to the year. Examples: In Revelation 3:10, the hour will be over six years. "The Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10) will be one thousand years. II Peter 3:8 declares with emphasis "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." This explains Hosea 6:2 - "After two days will He revive us (Israel): in the third day (the Millennial period) He will raise us up, and we (Israel) shall live in His sight." The "seventy weeks" of Daniel 9:24-27 must be reckoned the same way. Each day is a year long. Therefore, each week or seven days, means seven years. "Seventy weeks," or seventy times seven days, means 490 days; but its dispensational value is 490 years. From "the going forth of the commandment" (Daniel 9:27) is generally supposed to be the same as that seventieth week; but that cannot be. The seventieth week, or seven years, began with the death of Christ and ended in the year 40 A.D. when Jesus was "standing" ready to return if the Jews had received Him - Acts 7:55, 56. There are other citations of prophetic value. Jacob "bowed himself to the ground seven times" as Esau was approaching him - Genesis 33:3. Thus, he foreshadowed Israel's subjection to the nations for 2520 years. Numbers 14:34 is a striking citation in support of the year - day reckoning - "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise." In Ezekiel 4:4-6 we find the same sort of counting. The prophet was bidden to bear the iniquity of

the nation, "the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days." Hence, the Lord said to him, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." It is recorded in history, that the ten days tribulation of Revelation 2:10 were ten years (303 to 313 A.D.) of bitterest persecution under the Emperor Diocletian.

### **PERIOD OF THE GENTILE RULE**

It is indisputable that exactly 2520 years, or seven prophetic "times" of 360 years each, were foreshadowed in God's Word to be allotted to Gentile dominion. Therefore, if "the times of the Gentiles" or Gentile world dominion began in 606 B.C. we should have expected them to end in 1914. Why did they not end then? We answer that the beginning of Gentile dominion covered a period of nineteen years. Nebuchadnezzar, by divine direction, took the Jews captive in four distinct deportations, each more severe than the preceding one. Hence, his absolute and culminating authority over Israel, really dated from 587 B.C. On that date, the cup of God's "anger" against His people was filled up and He "cast them out from His Presence" - Jeremiah 52:3. The captivity of Jerusalem was consummated. The temple was burnt. The walls of the city were demolished. Zedekiah the usurper, for he "rebelled against the king of Babylon," was taken prisoner. Study closely Jeremiah 52:2, 3, 7, 13. From that day, Gentile rule had absolute sway - Daniel 2:37.

Likewise, the beginning of the end of "the times of the Gentiles" certainly came in 1914. As truly as its commencement covered a period of years, so its ending will cover an undetermined period of time. Such correspondences are some of the marvels of Bible history. Great events always have a beginning, a development, and a full consummation. All the startling social, religious, and national occurrences, from 1914 to the present, combine to show that "the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9) is upon us. Notable was the deliverance of Palestine from the power of the Turk, which God wrought by means of the first world war; and, since 1948, Israel has been recognized as a nation. Gentile dominion may end at any time God knows. We would not postpone Christ's coming.

### **"THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT"**

The nations will not admit that Gentile domination is over, but will form a seven-headed empire which will attempt to manage the affairs of the world. They will be out of the will of God. They will be usurpers, because their time of national rulership will have ceased. After that federation continues about three years, one man will get complete control and reign as universal despot for three and a half years - Revelation 13:1-5.

The Scriptures speak repeatedly of a period of distress and perplexity, unparalleled in history. The heavens and the earth will be in the throes of indescribable confusion, conflict, and pain. The Lord says, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations" - Haggai 2:6, 7. Joel announces that time, saying, "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come." He describes it as - "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His Word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" - Joel 1:15; 2:2, 11. Jeremiah 30:7 terms part of that day, "the time of Jacob's trouble," so great that there has never been any like it. Jesus said of the latter, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" - Matthew 24:21. Paul calls the entire period a time of destruction, of night, of darkness, of drunkenness, of wrath - I Thess. 5:3, 5, 7, 9. Also read II Thessalonians two. Finally, John forewarns us of "the hour of temptation (trial, R.V.), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" - Rev. 3:10. This is a very, very important citation, as we shall see later. He calls it "great tribulation" (literally, "the tribulation, the great one"), and "the hour of His (God's) judgment" - Rev. 7:14; 14:7. Oh, what a dreadful time that will be! All the prophets of the Old Testament have written elaborately of that time. Revelation 6:1 to 20:10 gives the description of that soon coming day of trial, judgment, and wrath. As referring to the Jews, that period is known as the last week of Daniel or the seven unfulfilled years of Daniel 9:27. As referring to the nations, it is a day of wrath and judgment. As referring to earth-dwellers personally, it is called an "hour of temptation (trial)." "The time of Jacob's trouble," or the

"tribulation" of Matthew 24:21, will be limited to Palestine; and it will occupy 1010 days of "the great tribulation" or "the hour of trial," of Rev. 7:14 (R.V.) and 3:10 (R.V.), which will be universal. Mark the distinction between "the hour of His judgment" (over six years long), and "Jacob's trouble" or "the tribulation" of Jeremiah 30:7 and Matthew 24:21 (1010 days long).

### **"THE DAY OF THE LORD"**

"And I saw another mighty Angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire: and He had in His hand a little book open: and He set His right foot upon the sea (the nations), and His left foot on the earth (the Jews), and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth" - Rev. 10:1 - 3. This "Mighty Angel" is our Lord Jesus Christ. The "cloud," with which He will be clothed, is the overcomers described in Revelation four and five. In 4:2 John beheld that "a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne." That One is Jesus, in fulfillment of Psalm 2:6. The Father will say, "Yet have I set My King (the Son) upon My holy hill of Zion." This agrees with Isaiah 14:13 - "the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." When Jesus thus takes His own throne in the heavens, the Father will command the nations, saying, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish" - Psalm 2:12.

At that time, in that same year that the Lord ascends His own throne in heaven, He will also assert His kingly authority over the whole world, as indicated by His standing on sea and land. Then He will swear by God the Father, "that there shall be time no longer" - Rev.10:6. It does not mean that the end of the world will then come, and eternity begin; for the Millennial reign must follow immediately. Indeed, Christ on His throne in heaven, really will mark the beginning of the Millennium. It means that the "times of the Gentiles" shall continue no longer. The seven prophetic times of Gentile national rulership will end, when Christ takes His own throne in heaven. If they continue in power, they will be usurpers. Two rulers, opposed to each other, cannot occupy a throne at the same time. The Greek word "chronos" cannot mean "delay," as the Revised Version says; but "time" as the Authorized Version gives it. In every Scripture it is thus rendered.

In Revelation 5:5 Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" because He, the Jew of destiny, shall sit on the throne of universal empire and reign as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" - Rev. 19:16. As a Lion, He has been couching in His den ("whom the heaven must receive" - Acts 3:21), lying in wait for His prey - Genesis 49:9, 10. Now being roused by the cry of His longing people the Jews, and by the ferocity of His enemies, He roars after His prey and seeks His meat from God - Psalm 104:21. The Lord "shall cry, yea, roar; He shall prevail against His enemies" ("He will do mightily against His enemies" - R.V.) - Isaiah 42:13. He will roar out His purpose to possess at once His promised possessions, even "the heathen" (the nations) for His "inheritance" on earth - Psalm 2:8.

### **REJECTERS, USURPERS, OFFENDERS**

Why will "the day of the Lord" be a day of darkness, gloominess, and wrath, as Joel 1:15 and 2:2, 11 declare? Why will it be a time of judgment and destruction? If the Millennium is due to begin when Christ is enthroned in heaven, and His reign is to be a reign of peace and righteousness, how is it that the prophets say that it will come in with unparalleled distress and sorrow? I will tell you. It is because the world will not be willing to receive Him. Three powerful forces, three companies of His creatures, will refuse to own His Lordship. Therefore, He will be compelled to gain the sovereignty over the earth by force. He must fight for His Kingly rights. REJECTERS. Jesus said to the Jews. "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not." He said further, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" - John 5:43. These two statements will be fulfilled when Jesus takes His throne in heaven and attempts to take control of affairs on the earth. The Jews as a nation will accept the overtures of a ruler called "the prince that shall come" (Daniel 9:26) who "shall confirm the covenant with many (the Jews) for one week," that is, seven years - Daniel 9:27. But their acceptance of that agreement will plunge them into the direst trouble they ever experienced. That "prince," nearly three years afterward, will prove to be the anti-Christ - the "man of sin ... the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God" - II Thess. 2:3, 4. He will break his covenant with the Jews in the middle of that "week" of seven years. At that very point, Jeremiah 30:7 will begin - "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble."

Our Lord informed His people of that same day - Matthew 24:15-22 - "... For then shall be great

tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake (those who will not bow to anti-Christ) those days shall be shortened." They will be shortened about eight months. John said, "The holy city shall they (the Gentiles) tread under foot forty and two months," or 1260 days - Revelation 11:2. Many Jews will be slain for refusing the mark of the beast. The very prince, who will make that firm agreement with the Jews, will afterward "make war with the saints, and ... overcome them" - Revelation 13:7; 12:17; 6:8, 10. Why all that dreadful calamity for those three and a half years? Because, when Christ will begin to reign, the Jews will not accept Him as their Messiah and King but will receive another in His stead. Their national freedom would be assured and perfected if they would receive Him; for as said before - "the times of the Gentiles" will end, and Jewish times will begin, when Jesus is crowned in Heaven. Therefore, the Jews' rejection of Christ at that moment will be the great cause of the terrible times coming. Their acceptance of Christ would at once put an end to gentile domination, and the foretold sorrows could not come; for, their decreed chastisement will end, when decreed Gentile rule ends. Peter shouted to his people, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you (or, before proclaimed to you), even Jesus: whom the Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things" - Acts 3:19-21 R.V. Oh, how much depends upon the Jews' attitude toward Jesus Universal blessing to the world through Him cannot come until they receive Him. "Seventy weeks (490 years) are determined (decreed, R.V.) upon thy people and upon thy holy city" - Daniel 9:24. We have already seen how that determined period ended in 40 A.D. I want to show you that the last seven years of that 490 years - called "the last week of Daniel" - would have been fulfilled from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1-11) to Stephen's death, if the Jews had only received Christ. All that Daniel 9:24 announced was accomplished from Calvary to Pentecost, in God's reckoning; even as Elijah came in the person of John the Baptist, if Israel had received him - Matthew 17:12. BY THE CROSS, the Lord finished transgression, made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity. BY CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, He brought in everlasting righteousness, and sealed up the vision and prophecy in Him, and the most holy (place) was anointed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the seventh year after Pentecost, Stephen saw Jesus standing at God's right hand ready to return to be their Messiah and King, if the Jews had accepted Him - Acts 7:55, 56. But they rejected Him, in slaying His servant Stephen; therefore, He "sat down" by His Father on His throne - Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 3:21. Daniel 9:24 was fulfilled, and awaits Israel's acceptance thereof. Why was the Spirit not poured out upon the Gentiles in Cornelius' house until after the above happenings? Because the Lord could not begin with the Gentiles until He had filled up His promise to His chosen people Israel.

We repeat that Daniel 9:24 was fulfilled, and it will not be fulfilled again. The year of our Lord's crucifixion and of Pentecost was the fiftieth year, a year of jubilee, in fulfillment of Leviticus twenty-five. Hence, the disciples had all things common. The blessings then falling were Millennial blessings. Those first seven fruitful years beginning with Pentecost, would have been the beginning of the thousand-year reign, if the Jews had accepted Christ. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His iron-like authority and power in the temple indicate that fact. Read Matthew twenty-one and marvel. Daniel 9:27 and the scores of other prophetic warnings of coming judgment would never have been written, if Gentile dominion had ended in 40 A.D.; for then Jesus would have taken the dominion. Jerusalem would never have been sacked and destroyed by the Romans. But God knew what the Jews would do; therefore, He continued with His plans for the Church Age. Christ must begin His Millennial dominion with judgment. The Jews' rejection of Him and their acceptance of a usurper, compel Him to do this. Jesus must thresh the nations, in order to deliver the Jews. Then in the seventh year of that dreadful hour of wrath, the Jews will receive Him and accept the seven blessings of Daniel 9:24 which were accomplished during His first advent.

### **AN UNFULFILLED WEEK**

Because the Jews did not accept Christ then, it generally is supposed that Daniel 9:24 will have to be fulfilled again as suggested by verse twenty-seven. But that is a mistake. Daniel 9:27 must be fulfilled, but not as a repetition of verse twenty-four nor as the fulfillment of the last seven

years of the 490 decreed years or seventy weeks. The facts outlined in verse twenty-seven stand by themselves, and refer to a period which has nothing to do with the seventy weeks of verse twenty-four. Let us read verse twenty-seven - "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 (desolator)."

Verse twenty-four promised blessings only, and all those proffered blessings came. Verse twenty-seven offers no blessing, but betokens distress and desolation. The "one week" of verse twenty-seven is not said to be the last week of the seventy. It must mean some other week or seven years. The last week of the seventy weeks was "determined" or decreed, with the other sixty-nine; but it is not said that the "one week" of verse twenty-seven was determined, upon the desolator. The Lord grants the gracious things of verse twenty-four. But "the prince" (verse 26), whose ancestors (the Romans) destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D., will be the cruel actor of verse twenty-seven. He will not act by divine authority; but will act squarely against divine authority, and incited by Satan. Hence, "the end thereof shall be with a flood" (verse 26); that is, in judgment, wrath being poured upon him as the desolator. He will be an abominable usurper; and the Jews will make themselves partakers of his crime by accepting his overtures, and will bring upon themselves unspeakable anguish and pain. They ought to accept "the Messiah the Prince" (verse 25), who will be the rightful King.

USURPERS. A gigantic and formidable organized company of usurpers will be arrayed against Jesus Christ after His enthronement. Study Psalm two, which applies wholly to that period. "Why do the heathen (nations) rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" - Psalm 2:1-3. Verse six proves that this will be AFTER Jesus is on His throne - "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." Verses seven, eight, and twelve show that CHRIST is meant, and not David. Also, Isaiah 14:13, 14 with Ezekiel 28:14 make plain that "the sides of the north" or "the holy mountain" here means the place of His throne in Heaven in agreement with Revelation 4:2 - "A throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the throne." Why will the kings rage against Christ? Because, from His throne on high, He will assert His rights to universal dominion; and they will refuse to surrender. What is the purpose of the seven-headed league of nations, of Revelation 13:1, 2? "The times of the Gentiles," that is the divinely allotted tenure of Gentile rule, will be ended; and the Millennium will be due. They will seek to introduce the Millennium by announcing, "Peace and safety" - I Thess. 5:3. They are even now preparing terrible war implements, with which to enforce peace and insure safety. But they will be usurpers. They will be absolutely out of divine order, and yielding to the devil. The kings of this world want a millennium without Jesus Christ, because they do not want to be born again. The old creation insists on having sway. They would rule God and His Son out of the universe today, if they could. Their last desperate effort to do so will be during those nearly seven years of awful gloom, darkness, and judgment.

### INSPIRED BY SATAN

"And there was war in heaven." That has not yet happened. John only saw it in vision as if it had happened. "Michael and his angels (more than one hundred million - Rev. 5:11) fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven" - Rev. 12:7, 8. Without doubt, when Jesus arises from His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21) to set up His own throne, that war between Michael and Satan will begin. Satan's domain evidently is in the very region on high, which the Church shall occupy. Our "high calling" (Phil.3:14) wicked spirits "in the heavenly places" - Eph. 6:12 R.V. Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" - Eph. 2:2. By translation, we shall "meet the Lord in the air" - I Thess. 4:17. Hence, there will remain no place for Satan and his host up yonder. Michael must cast him out. It will not surprise me to learn some day that Michael and Lucifer have been locking horns ever since 1914; for that date doubtless was the beginning of the end of this age. Oh, think of it! If two-thirds of the angels in Heaven marshaled on one side by Michael the angel of power will be arrayed in fierce combat against one-third of the angels led by Satan the angel of light on the other side, can we wonder that there will be signs and fearful sights in Heaven and sleepless unrest and death-seeking frights and perplexity everywhere - "the sea and the waves roaring;

men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"? Ah! The heavens will be shaken indeed, and the dragon will be shaken out to return no more forever. If Satan is not a usurper in heaven now, he certainly will be, after Jesus will be enthroned in Heaven. Hence, Michael will eject him ruthlessly.

The "beast ... having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns" (Rev. 13:1), will be the counterpart on earth of the "great red dragon" in heaven (Rev. 12:3). The devil's organized maneuverings in heaven will be reproduced on earth through the league of nations, the dormant Roman Empire included. The repeated international conferences of today are leading up to the perfecting of that league. When Jesus Christ begins to assert His Kingly rights on earth, that league will declare "peace and safety" to the world as suggested by the "white horse" and rider of Rev. 6:2; and the war in heaven, between Michael and Lucifer, will be fully set. That peace and safety will be brief; for, "sudden destruction" will ensue, as figured by the "red horse" of Rev. 6:4. That will be "the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24:8), the preliminary troubles of Revelation eight, or the beginning of "the hour of temptation" - Rev. 3:10. In less than three years from that time, the war in Heaven will be over, Satan will be hurled to the earth (Rev. 12:9), and the reign of anti-Christ for forty-two months will follow - Revelation 13:5.

Those days of Gentile dominion will be in usurpation. All the national rulers during that period will be usurpers, because they will be arrayed against Christ - the divinely authorized King. The devil, cast out of heaven as a usurper, will refuse to go to hell at once; but for 1260 days will inspire his "man of sin" to blaspheme God, "and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" - Rev. 13:6. Therefore, the hot bowls of God's wrath will be poured out without measure upon the nations, as indicated in Revelation fourteen to sixteen. God will fight for His Son against the usurpers. "He shall judge the world in righteousness" - Psalm 9:8. If the people were doing right, He would not be righteous in judging them. If the kings were ruling in His will, within the ordained period of Gentile dominion, He would be unjust in pouring out His wrath upon them. But because the nations will be rebellious, devilish usurpers, and stoutly and blasphemously refuse the dominion of Christ, God will conquer them by crushing them. He will even "break them with a rod of iron," and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" - Psalm 2:9.

Why will the "Stone," cut out without hands, smite the image upon the feet of iron and clay? - Daniel 2:34. Because, when the "Stone" comes on the scene, it will be the time for Him to reign. When the "great mountain" arises - the Kingdom of Christ - Gentile dominion will end. If that were not true, the "Stone" would be the usurper in smiting the feet of the image or the imperial democratic league of nations. But, He will smite, because He will have the right to reign. After God gave the world dominion over to the nations (Daniel 2:37), the kings of Israel were considered rebellious if they did not submit to that dominion. God was displeased with such rebellion and punished them for it - II Kings 24:1, 2 and Jeremiah 52:2-5. Just so, when He will change "the times" from Gentile to Jewish dominion, and "the seasons" to run according to the Jewish calendar (Daniel 2:21), then the kings will be usurpers in prolonging their dominion. God will be absolutely just in wresting the dominion from them by divine judgment. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" - Romans 3:4.

### **AN OBJECTION EXPLAINED**

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" - Matthew 24:13, 14. At first, we might suppose that "the end" in this quotation means the end of this age or of the Gentile times, in answer to the disciple's third question of verse three. That cannot be its meaning. Verses 8-28 describe the affliction, abounding iniquity, and unparalleled tribulation or judgment, just preceding Christ's revelation to His people Israel. "The end" means the end of those awful days, the end of Daniel's "week" of desolations (Daniel 9:27), which will climax with the battle of Armageddon. The "times of the Gentiles," that is the nations' allotted dominion, will end 2270 days prior to the end of "Jacob's trouble" - Jeremiah 30:7. The disciples put three queries to Jesus, but none of them referred to that seven years of tribulation. The first referred to the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. The second and third refer to Jesus' second advent and the end of the Millennium. Bear in mind, that the disciples then knew nothing about this Church Age. They were concerned only about the Kingdom - Acts 1:3, 6. Concerning the end of the Kingdom, He gave them instruction before - Matthew 13:37-50. In Matthew 24:3 they asked "the sign" of that end, that is, "the end of the world"; which in 13:39,

40, 49 should read "the consummation of the age" - Revised Version Margin.

Therefore, they requested to know the sign of the consummation of the Millennial Age, not of the end of the Gentile dominion; for that theme was not under consideration. The Greek word translated "end," in the four verses just cited, is "synteleias." It literally means, "bringing to an end together, a completion, a consummation," and is used only in connection with the age, or ages. See also Matthew 28:20 and Hebrews 9:26. Revelation 2:26 - "... keepeth My works unto the end," refers to the same time. The Greek for "end" in Matthew 24:6, 13, 14 is "telos," the general term for the end or cessation of anything. Hence, these three latter verses cannot mean the end or completion of any age.

"This Gospel ... for a witness." Though the Gospel has been proclaimed throughout the world during the past nineteen hundred years, yet its proclamation will be completed during the seven coming years of judgment. It will be the "Gospel of the Kingdom" in particular. The publishing of it will result in "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25), it being the final witness to all the world in view of Christ's unsurpassed reign of righteousness and peace. In Rev. 14:6 it is called "the everlasting Gospel." It will be broadcasted by a flying angel or swift messenger. That messenger probably represents a company of powerful flaming evangelists. Philip's aerial Gospel flight (Acts 8), typifies that miraculous ministry. Note the substance of the message - "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" - Rev. 14:7. Men everywhere will be compelled to hear that the Son of God is on His own throne in Heaven, and justly demanding their worship and subjection. Now Jesus had said that after that phenomenal spreading of the Gospel of the Kingdom, "then shall the end come"; that is, the end of the unparalleled troubles which He outlined before the disciples. He Himself will then descend and deliver the Jews from death, by casting the anti-Christ and false prophet into the lake of fire. The original word here for "end" is "telos," as stated before. In Mark 13:7, 13 and Luke 21:9, the Greek for "end" is "telos" and refers to the cessation of the sorrows. According to both those records, the disciples did not ask about the consummation ("synteleias") of any age, but only about the tribulation.

#### **SPACE TO REPENT**

When Nebuchadnezzar became king over Babylon, it seems that the Lord gave the Jews nineteen years to repent and behave themselves. If they had done so, the seventy years of captivity would doubtless never have come, though they might have been under Gentile rule. Was not that the purpose of Jeremiah's tearful warnings and entreaties? But like as afterward, in Christ's time, they "would not." So it seems that God has given the Gentiles extra time beginning with 1914, to repent and acknowledge Christ as Saviour, in view of receiving Him as the ordained "King of kings, and Lord of lords" - I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16. Why does Paul say to the Gentiles, "Boast not against the branches (the Jews) ... Be not high-minded, but fear"? - Romans 11:18-21. What is the divine purpose of the sovereign "Latter Rain" with its accompanying mighty miracles, signs, and wonders? Why is so much being said and written about the coming of Jesus? Why are the nations being warned of awful judgments just ahead? It is "the day of His preparation" - Nahum 2:3. If the Jews and Gentiles today would heed the warnings, the predicted judgments would not come. But, God knew before, that the world would not take heed; therefore, they will be compelled to take His wrath, of which He has given abundant and explicit announcement. The Jews' refusal of Christ's Messiahship and the Gentiles' usurpation of His Kingship will occasion the just day of woe.

OFFENDERS. "Give none offense, neither to the JEWS, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD" - I Cor. 10:32. We have arrived at the third cause of the great and terrible day, the "day of darkness and of gloominess." We saw that THE JEWS WILL BE THE REJECTERS of Christ. We saw also that THE GENTILE KINGS WILL BE THE USURPERS, because they will not acknowledge Christ as the rightful world Ruler. But who will be the offenders? We answer by asking, "To whom did Paul write the above caution?" To the saints in Corinth, of course, who were becoming inflated with their place - I Cor. 4:6, 7. Israel was the ordained "light of the world" - Matthew 5:14. Her light went out, by rejecting Jesus who is "THE LIGHT" in Himself. After His ascension, the Church was its only "light" or luminary - Eph. 5:8; Phil. 2:15. Presently, her shining grew dim. Ephesus left her "first love." Pergamos held His Name in profession but denied it in conduct, which Corinth was also beginning to do. Pergamos tolerated the doctrine of Balaam, or fellowship with the world - Rev. 2:14. Thyatira allowed the false

prophetess, Jezebel, to seduce God's servants into spiritual fornication - Rev. 2:20. In 300 A.D., Constantine befriended the Christians, persecution ceased, the saints lost their power, and Church and State soon locked arms in fellowship. Thus, the Church began to offend or cause to stumble. The high standard of a victorious life was pulled down to "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" - II Timothy 3:5.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, which claims to be the "mother church," is the CHIEF OFFENDER of all mankind. She offends the Jews, by holding that the Church has taken Israel's place as the Kingdom of God on earth. If that were true, then God's many promises to Israel could never be fulfilled. Rome applies them all to herself, and dwells upon the earth; but the calling of the true Church is an upward, a "heavenly calling" - Hebrews 3:1. Her Home is "eternal in the heavens" - II Cor. 5:1. Rome offends the Gentiles also, by making the kings drunk with the wine of her fornication. She intoxicates them with conquest. She teaches that the Church is to convert the world and bring in the Millennium. By her doctrine, she will lead the nations into rebellion against God and cause them to usurp the throne of Jesus Christ. Thus, Rome sits on the beast and reigns "over the kings of the earth" - Rev. 17:3, 18. Through her Cain religion of works, her mock piety, her self-imposed sanctify, her "devout" nunneries, her "holy" priesthood, etc., she deceives the nations. She barter with "slaves, and souls of men," causing them to stumble into hell - Rev. 18:1-24. As the professed church of Christ, she offends the true Church of Christ. That is the apostle's meaning in saying, "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God." The spirit of pride, self-will, conceit, importance, self-glorifying - departing from Paul's "ways which be in Christ" - was cropping out in Corinth - I Cor. 4:6-18. By yielding to that spirit, they would cause other saints to stumble.

Not only Rome but Protestantism, also, is offending. Despite all the repeated revivals since the Reformation, Jesus said, "I have not found thy works perfect before God" - Rev. 3:2. she boasts of her wealth and numbers, but the Lord pronounces her "lukewarm ... wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" - Rev. 3:16, 17. She also casts a stumblingblock before Jews and Gentiles by offering them a religion without reality, life, and power. She entices the people to church on Sunday, but gives them husks of vain profession. Protestants also, like Rome, are encouraging the nations to try to bring forth a millennium without Christ. Thus, she is helping to pave the way for the "day of darkness and of gloominess." The whole of professed Christendom, Catholicism and Protestantism uniting, is boldly inviting "the hour of temptation" (trial), "the hour of His judgment" - Rev. 3:10; 14:7. For their terrible offense against the world, God will destroy the one and spue out the other.

### A SOLEMN FINALE

"Because thou hast kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (literally, out of) the hour of temptation (or, trial), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" - Rev. 3:10. The hour of trial shall come; but some saints will be KEPT OUT of it by entering the "open door" into Heaven. Who will they be? Answer: They who have "a little strength"; they in whom the candlestick Judge finds no blame, but says, "Thou ... hast KEPT MY WORD" (which fully qualifies for translation), "and hast NOT DENIED MY NAME" (held Christ only as Lord and Head). They are "sober" (not affectedly pious), "putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation" - that is, salvation from the day of wrath - I Thess. 5:8. Dear Reader, are you seeking to be one of those?

Beloved, many believers will not be in that fortunate company. The repeated entreaties of I Thessalonians five, warn us against carelessness, sleepiness, and intoxication. Why does the apostle say, "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others"? He means other believers; for sinners are never said to be asleep, but "dead in trespasses and sins" - Eph. 2:1. Five of the virgins were "foolish," because they refused the oil when the wise were filling their vessels. They were not sinners; for they had lighted lamps, which were "going out" - Matthew 25:8 Revised Version. They were awake, looking for Jesus to come; but they fell into slumber and sleep. They were not sinners, but "virgins," though foolish. They speak of believers who reject the "Latter Rain." Many who receive the Spirit, will not be kept out of that day of trial, because they do not walk in the Spirit; they do not purify themselves "even as He is pure" (I John 3:3) and keep the Word of His patience. Thus, they give offense, to the extent that they are disobedient. They help that dark day to appear, instead of qualifying to escape it. They are out of God's perfect will. But God's words to the overcomers are, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the

night, nor of darkness" - I Thessalonians 5:5.

We must emphasize this sad fact. The Church will not all be caught away at the first blast of the trumpet. The many words of eulogy, written in I Thessalonians, are not true of the entire Church. There is not even one note of blame recorded against these saints. Consider the following precious statements: "Your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope." "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe." "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." The next statements show what an exalted place they should occupy, and in what class the apostle reckoned them. "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? For ye are our glory and joy" - I Thess. 1:3, 7; 2:13, 19, 20. We have named only six of the excellencies of the fully faithful ones in that assembly.

The second Epistle to the Thessalonians does not record such striking qualities. It is addressed especially to those who will be here after the others have gone. In the second letter, we read of the "brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us"; and of "some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" - 3:6, 11. The second letter tells of the happenings during the "night," or "hour of temptation (trial)"; and contains words of instruction and comfort for those who will be so unfortunate as to be living on earth then. Paul said also, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink (spiritually, as well as naturally), or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the JEWS, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD" - I Cor. 10:31, 32. Because saints do not heed these words of the Holy Spirit, the Philadelphia company expressed by the four living ones and twenty-four elders (Revelation four) will be a small company comparatively. That is why the innumerable company is seen IN the time of the "great tribulation," and "CAME OUT" of it - Rev. 7:14. Is it not far wiser to live so as to be KEPT FROM, than to COME OUT after being in it and "hurt of the second death"? Hear the Lord's last comforting and warning admonition to blameless believers - "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" - Revelation 3:11