

Chapter 10

The Next-to-Last Days

Let's check our bearings. At this point in our story, the rapture is past—the *Ekklesia* is gone from the earth. Many will beg to differ, of course; there still exists a wealthy and powerful religion that calls itself “Christianity,” and people are flocking to its churches and cathedrals in droves, looking for answers. Well they should. Multiplied millions of Bible-believing Christians—often whole families—from all over the earth have disappeared into thin air, leaving the world puzzled, grieving, and not a little frightened.

Humanity, however, is demonstrating once again why it's at the top of the food chain. Life is gradually beginning to regain it's normal patterns. The carnage that accompanied “the Event”—car and airplane crashes, infrastructure failures, rioting in the streets—is well on its way toward being cleaned up. Most people have their electricity and phone service back on and have discovered who among their circle of acquaintances is gone. Mankind is finding out the hard way just how resilient the species is. Life goes on.

The West was hardest hit, of course, for more Christians lived there than anywhere else. Indeed, in some countries, if it were not for the news stories, life would be unchanged. But as it is, all over the world a vague mood emerges that life will never really be the same. Even in places that were relatively unscathed, a foreboding descends—a feeling of dread that won't go away. *If “they” can come in anytime they want and take people out, we'll never be safe again.* The only remotely plausible answers are not reassuring. Alien invasion, superweapons in the hands of technologically sophisticated (and as yet unnamed) rogue governments, even the retribution of Allah against the infidels—none of the emerging theories have a shred of evidence to support them.

But a small group of people—mostly Americans—remember hearing wild tales about Biblical prophecies describing this very thing. Never believed them, of course. But now they're searching for answers. Much of what they remember comes from the spooky and speculative pop-documentaries they used to see on cable TV. They're being gleefully rerun with great frequency these days, but since they didn't have their facts straight in the first place, they're of little value now—except to the commercial sponsors.

The Bible itself doesn't seem to make much sense at first, so these new searchers begin to scour the country for books about eschatology, though they don't know that word. They look in bookstores, in public libraries, on the Internet. Some bright fellow gets the idea to break in and rummage through the private

libraries of the missing people—and he hits pay dirt. The Event was described—precisely as it happened—something like two thousand years before. It was called the “rapture.” Armed with this information, these researchers go back to the Bible, as the books suggested, and sure enough, there are the predictions. (They never do find the word “rapture,” but everything else is there, hints and innuendoes scattered all over the place in scripture.)

And slowly, one by one, these men and women come to realize the good news *and* the bad news: there *is* an all-powerful, holy, and loving God. We have fallen short of His standards and therefore cannot exist in His presence, 'cause that's what holiness is all about—separation from evil. But He has provided a means whereby we can regain a position of fellowship with Him—we can actually *live forever*. This God came and lived among us as a man, and in a process of self-sacrifice that we'll never fully understand, He gave His life so that we might live. All we have to do is accept His gift of life, acknowledging Him as our Savior. These folks, having seen the power of God first hand, become the first post-rapture believers—charter members of the Fellowship of Repentant Laodicea.

That, believe it or not, is all “the good news,” though it's kind of like coming home and announcing, “Good news: the airbags in the car work!” The bad news comes when the researchers get into the “judgment” passages, especially Revelation, and discover that the chances of them getting out of this alive are slim to the point of anorexia. The end is very near indeed, they find, and they learn that many of them will not live to see how it all turns out. But the chips are down. These new believers suck up their courage and pray to a God they barely know (one whose name, Yahweh, many of them will never learn because it has been edited out of virtually every English Bible translation, replaced with a misleading title—“the Lord.”) They pray: *God, I have blown all my chances before today. I know that now. But with Your help, I want to serve you during whatever time I've got left. I pray that I will make it through to the end, but if it means martyrdom for me, I'll accept that. Help me, Jesus!*

The next few weeks bring excitement and personal peace, along with ridicule and confusion, to these new believers. One of the sources of their confusion is a pervasive myth among Biblical expositors that the Tribulation will begin immediately after the rapture. *But where is the Antichrist? Who is Mystery Babylon? Nobody's asked me to take the Mark of the Beast. I don't get it!* The fact is that nowhere in scripture is the timing of the rapture directly tied to the Tribulation, or any other event. It *could* begin almost right away, but there could just as easily be a gap of several years between one event and the other. It all depends on when God chooses to “pull the trigger.”

I believe the reason they're not overtly connected chronologically is that God didn't want *Satan* knowing when the rapture would be—He was protecting us

from the devil's head games. The Tribulation, as we have seen, is a seven-year period, beginning with a specifically prophesied event. If you know what this event is, if you recognize it when you see it, you can calculate exactly—to the day—when the Tribulation will end. But if its commencement is not tied to the rapture, it will *still* come upon an unbelieving world “like a thief in the night.” Remember, Satan has been around since the beginning of our time. He knows Yahweh's seven-millennium plan far better than we do—and he has no doubt figured out when Yahshua will return in glory. The one thing he doesn't know is when Yahshua is coming back for his people. No one does.

Unfortunately, if a lifetime of study is insufficient for a guy like me to get to the bottom of all the mysteries, then a couple of weeks of research by these new brothers and sisters will probably not reveal to them much more than the bare-bones structure of the last days. They will have to do most of their Bible study “in the saddle,” like Abraham and Moses did.

That being said, my sense is that once the rapture is history, things will move rapidly toward their final consummation. If “**This generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place**” (Matthew 24:34) means what it seems to mean, then the pieces will have to fall into place quickly indeed. For there are underlying conditions that must be met in order for the prophecies to come to pass. And other conditions are suggested by scripture, though not overtly predicted, that will play a part in the fulfillment of the body of end-times prophecy. All of these things take time to develop, so it's not surprising that some of them have already begun to make themselves evident.

Easily the most fundamental of these conditions is the presence of Israel in the land. Everything hinges upon the Jews' occupation of Canaan—anything approaching the literal fulfillment of prophecy is impossible without it. Of course, before World War I, the chances of Israel's return looked somewhere between vanishingly remote and nonexistent. But then a British Jew named Chaim Weizmann invented synthetic acetone—used in the manufacture of explosives—helping his nation defeat the Germans and their allies. A grateful Parliament asked him what he'd like as a token of their thanks. He could have asked for almost anything, I suppose, but Weizmann—knowing the British had wrested control of Palestine from the defeated Ottoman Turks—asked for a homeland there for his people. The resulting Balfour Declaration, a November 1917 letter from Arthur James Lord Balfour to Lord Rothschild, represents the first political recognition of the Zionist cause by any major world power. It stated Britain's

willingness—in principle—to comply with Weizmann’s request. But then they dragged their feet for thirty years. After the Nazi Holocaust of World War II, however, the British—and the world—could no longer ignore the plight of the Jews. In November, 1947, the United Nations, itself only two years old, partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab sections. (The British, if you can believe it, abstained from the voting.) And on May 14, 1948 the Jews declared Israel to be a sovereign state.

The world should not have been so surprised. The prophet Ezekiel, writing in the 6th century B.C., saw it coming: **“The hand of Yahweh came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of Yahweh, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ So I answered, ‘O Lord Yahweh, You know.’ Again He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh! Thus says Yahweh to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh....”** This was the state of Israel between A.D. 135 (when Rome under Hadrian finished what Vespasian and Titus had started, expelling the Jews from Judea and renaming it Palestine) and 1948. Nationally, they were nothing but dead, dry bones, scattered to the four winds. But God had plans for them.

“So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them....” Since the “sudden” rebirth of the nation of Israel, they have been in this state—physically alive but spiritually dead. They will remain in this condition until they turn to Yahweh in repentance and faith, recognizing Yahshua as their Messiah. I’m not guessing here, by the way. The following two chapters in Ezekiel describe precisely how this will happen—but we’ll have to save that discussion for later.

“Also He said to me, ‘Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says Yahweh: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army....” We’re getting a glimpse into the future here. The nation of Israel will be brought back to life *spiritually* as they were physically: wind and breath (both are the same Hebrew word: *ruach*) are indicative of the Holy Spirit. Now, in case you think that applying this odd prophecy to Israel is unwarranted, read on....

“Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ Therefore

prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says Yahweh: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it and performed it,' says Yahweh." (Ezekiel 37:1-14) God gave the prophet a whole list of things that will happen—the “graves” of Israel’s captivity will be opened, they will come to their own land, they will be made alive by God’s Spirit, and they will recognize that it is Yahweh, and not coincidence, who has performed all of this. Today they’re halfway there.

God hadn’t exhausted the subject. Ezekiel continues: **“Again the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ‘As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: “For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.” Then take another stick and write on it, “For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.” Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand....”** At this time in Israel’s history, the kingdom was divided. The northern ten tribes had broken off from Judah and Benjamin in 930 B.C., three hundred years before Ezekiel’s day. The break was apparently total and permanent. Yahweh didn’t care; they would be one nation again.

“And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, “Will you not show us what you mean by these?”—say to them, “Thus says Yahweh: Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.” And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. Then say to them, “Thus says Yahweh: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.” (Ezekiel 37:15-22) This is a work in process. It began in the mid 19th century and it continues to this day. Those in Israel (and Washington) who would trade land for the promise of peace (historically the most foolish of bargains—remember Czechoslovakia?) should note that the prophecy specified “on the mountains of Israel.” This area is within the West Bank, the land that the historically challenged politicians want to give to the Palestinian Arabs. And remember: in Numbers 34 and elsewhere Yahweh specified that the Jordan River would be Israel’s eastern border. God’s prophecy is written. What makes the politicians think they can unwrite it?

But we’re not talking about Israeli/Arab squabbles here. Ezekiel is speaking of healing rifts between Jews. Forget for the moment that you can’t get ten Israelis together in a room without having eleven opinions represented. A divergence of

political viewpoint is not the same as civil war. Yahweh is saying that the divided kingdom of Ephraim and Judah is to be a thing of the past.

That's saying a mouthful, however. The northern kingdom, which came to be known by the name of its capital, Samaria, was hated and scorned by the southern Jews because those who had not been scattered to the four winds by their Assyrian conquerors had intermarried with the gentile peoples living around them. They were no longer racially pure. So diluted was the bloodline, in fact, that after the Assyrian captivity they became commonly known as "the ten lost tribes of Israel," although that's not a Biblical concept. They're not lost to Yahweh. "Israel" consists of both "Judah" and "Ephraim," regardless of whether or not they are aware of their Israelite lineage. Yahweh not only knows who's a Jew/Israelite and who isn't, He even knows which of the twelve tribes each individual belongs to. More to the point, I believe the Jews themselves will know before the Tribulation is over. How? I'll tell you later in this chapter.

The *why* of it is much more important anyway—why do the Jews (most of them) still find themselves in a position of exile and ignorance at this late date? It's because at almost every juncture in their long and checkered history they did precisely what Yahweh told them not to do. It's not like they weren't warned. **"When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and do evil in the sight of Yahweh your God to provoke Him to anger, I [Moses] call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. And Yahweh will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where Yahweh will drive you. And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell."** That much is history. But there is reason for hope. There is no "if" attached to Israel's restoration, only a "when." **"But from there you will seek Yahweh your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to Yahweh your God and obey His voice (for Yahweh your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."** (Deuteronomy 4:25-31)

Yahweh spoke through the prophet Nathan to remind David that He *wants* the Jews to have a secure homeland. It gives Him no pleasure to have to discipline His chosen people by removing them from the Land. **"I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. (II Samuel 7:10-11, cf. I Chronicles 17:9-10)**

For his part, David was only too aware of his God's desire to bless his people: **"Oh, give thanks to Yahweh, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. And say, 'Save us, O God of our salvation; gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise.' Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!"** (I Chronicles 16:34-36, cf. Psalm 106:47) The Jews were enjoying an unprecedented period of blessing under David's reign. They had yet to be scattered under the Gentile lash. So his request to "gather us" and "deliver us" were prophetic, as was this Psalm in which he looks forward to Israel's final restoration: **"Lord, You have been favorable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin. You have taken away all Your wrath; You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.** (Psalm 85:1-3)

Jeremiah, on the other hand, saw the destruction and deportation of his people with his own eyes—after preaching to deaf Jewish ears for forty years. If anyone had a right to be bitter, it was this "weeping prophet," and yet he spoke again and again about Israel's bright future. **"But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.** (Jeremiah 23:3) Or, **"Behold, the days are coming,' says Yahweh, 'that they shall no longer say, 'As Yahweh lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As Yahweh lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."** (Jeremiah 23:7-8) That's an interesting description of their place of exile: "the north country." Babylon—where they were being carted off to at the time—was more east than north. But where did the vast majority of immigrants to modern Israel come from? Eastern Europe and Russia—the "north country."

As if he hadn't made himself clear yet, Jeremiah kept going. **"For behold, the days are coming,' says Yahweh, 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah. And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."** (Jeremiah 30:3) Notice that the Jews (not just Judah, but all of Israel) won't return on their own, but Yahweh will "bring" them, will "cause them to return." Why? Because of the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The prophet continued: **"Thus says Yahweh: 'Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded,' says Yahweh, 'and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future,' says Yahweh, 'that your children shall come back to their own border. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself: 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained bull. Restore me, and I will return, for You are Yahweh my God. Surely, after my turning, I repented; and after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh; I was ashamed, yes, even humiliated, because I bore the reproach of my youth.' Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For**

though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him,' says Yahweh." (Jeremiah 31:16-20) Though he was primarily a prophet to Judah, Jeremiah has just delivered a message of hope and comfort to Ephraim (a.k.a. Samaria, the Northern Kingdom, or "Israel")—who had been conquered, dispersed, and assimilated—diluted and polluted—by Assyria 130 years before! Yahweh knows who his people are—all of them.

Next, Yahweh chides the future Israel for taking their sweet time returning. **"Set up signposts, make landmarks. Set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went. Turn back, O virgin of Israel, turn back to these your cities. How long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter? For Yahweh has created a new thing in the earth—a woman shall encompass a man."** (Jeremiah 31:21-22) It's kind of a dare: *How long are you going to fool around, you silly girl of a nation, just because it's "impossible?"* I, Yahweh, have given you—a weak, defenseless "woman,"—the strength to overcome a fierce, strong "man," the weight of the whole world's animosity and opposition. Even today, no more than half of the world's Jews live in the Promised Land.

"Thus says Yahweh, the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: 'Yahweh bless you, O home of justice, and mountain of holiness!' And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul....Behold, the days are coming,' says Yahweh, 'that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,' says Yahweh." (Jeremiah 31:23-28) When the Zionist movement started picking up steam in the late 19th century, Palestine was a desolate, sparsely populated province of Syria. Despite all the Muslim rhetoric of recent days, nobody seemed to want the place. Long before their statehood was granted to them, Jews came in and bought (*bought*, not conquered, seized, or "occupied") large tracts of present-day Israel from Arabs who considered the land worthless. It was these Jews who began to "build and plant" the prosperous nation that exists today, under the watchful eye of Yahweh.

And what was that about "speech?" Although the Hebrew tongue had never "died" in the sense that it was totally unused, few Jews other than scholars and rabbis knew the language. Three quarters of the world's Jews spoke Yiddish, and most of the rest were confined to their local tongues, mostly European languages. The Zionists showed foresight and courage when they determined early in the 20th century that Hebrew, not Yiddish, German, or Arabic, would be the official language of Eretz Israel. I'm told that even today, the Israelis don't normally assimilate new words from other languages. Rather, when a new thing appears

that needs naming—“space satellite,” for example—they simply coin a new Hebrew-sounding word instead of borrowing from English or some other language.

Why? The prophet Zephaniah explains it: **“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering.** (Zephaniah 3:9-10) Where did the lion’s share of seed money for the rebuilding of Israel come from? Not from the same lands that provided the immigrants, but from America—its Jews, but also its people in general through foreign aid (Israel is perennially the biggest item in the budget) and Christian charity. And how is this land described by the prophet? “Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.” That sounds like it ought to be in Africa, but if we reverse-engineer the prophecy, noting who turned out to be the “daughters of My dispersed ones,” and who “brought My offering,” It can only mean the United States of America. Remember that phrase, **“Beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,”** and what it means, for it helps to explain one of the great mysteries of Biblical prophecy. (But alas, as much as I’d like to chase this rabbit, I’m going to have to save it for a later chapter.)

That’s not the only sideways reference to Christians in regard to the Jews’ return to the Land. Consider this fascinating gem from Jeremiah: **“Yahweh has appeared of old to me [Israel], saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria [again, this is in the West Bank]; the planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food. For there shall be a day when the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to Yahweh our God.’”** (Jeremiah 31:3-6) Who are these “watchmen?” The Hebrew word is *natsar*, described in *Strong’s* as “To guard, in a good sense (protect, maintain, etc.) or a bad one (to conceal, etc.), to keep, observe, preserve, or watch.” *So what? Natsar* was the root of the name Nazareth, the town where Yahshua grew up. *Again, so what?* Acts 24:5 points out that the early Christians were called the sect of the Nazarenes. To this day, Christians in Israel are referred to in Hebrew as *natsar*—the watchmen of Jeremiah 31, who say, **“Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to Yahweh our God.”** In other words, the Christians’ lead in calling on Yahweh will light the way for the Jews in Zion.

It seems God never gets tired of calling his people home. **“Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,’ says Yahweh, ‘for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven. Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.... Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.** (Zechariah 2:6-7, 8:7-8) I guess Yahweh

isn't impressed with Islamic claims on Jerusalem—He says *His* people are going to live there. And where will they come from? From “**abroad like the four winds of heaven,**” i.e., all over the place, but primarily from the east, the west, and the north. That is reality today. They have been “dwelling in the midst of Jerusalem” for over a century now, but especially since their stunning—dare I say *miraculous*—defeat of Muslim forces in 1967's Six-Day War. Living there in peace and security is another matter.

In all of that, there's lots of talk about *what*—the Jews' returning—and very little reference to *when*. You could conclude that it's a moot point, since Israel has already returned to the Land, physically, if not spiritually. Forget for a moment that the Muslims have been trying to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean since 1947. Forget that the weight of world opinion is demanding that Israel commit political (if not physical) suicide by creating a Palestinian State within its borders. Forget the pressure to take Jerusalem out of Israeli hands and make it an “international city of prayer,” whatever that means. Within the next quarter century or so, the Israeli Arab population—at its present rate of growth—will have grown large enough to *vote* Israel out of existence in the Knesset. Left to the devices of man, the Jews in Israel *will* eventually be driven back out of the Land. But Yahweh has other ideas. And remember, He delights in doing the impossible—which is about what Israel's long-term survival looks like these days.

I can assure you, however, that the Jews' presence—and even a certain level of prosperity—in Palestine is assured until well after the commencement of the Tribulation. How can I make such an unlikely prediction? Because the Jewish Temple must exist in Jerusalem—with its traditional Levitical liturgy in full operation—in order for the prophecies concerning the Antichrist to be literally fulfilled.

Daniel prophesied that the Temple would be the setting for some major events during the last days. That was a fairly remarkable statement for him to make, since Solomon's Temple had been destroyed by his boss Nebuchadnezzar years before he received his vision. The prophecy is fairly complicated, involving near and far fulfillments (which were *all* future to the prophet, though not to us). The second-century B.C. Antiochus IV Epiphanes morphs into the Antichrist in the middle of the prediction, but it's clear that the final fulfillment is reserved for the last days. We pick up the story in the 8th chapter: “**And out of one of them [Alexander's four generals] came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the**

south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land. And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered. Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?’ And he said to me, ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.’” (Daniel 8:9-14) Up to this point, all of this is fulfilled prophecy, though some of it may have future ramifications as well. The Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes began his persecution of the Jews (here called the “host of heaven”) in 171 B.C., slaughtering a pig on the altar of the second temple. 2,300 days later (in December, 165 B.C., now celebrated as Hanukkah) Judas Maccabeus finally succeeded in restoring the temple for its proper service.

If it’s already fulfilled, why am I even bringing it up? It’s because of what came next: “**Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, ‘Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.’ So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, ‘Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.’ Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright. And he said, ‘Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.’**” (Daniel 8:15-19) In other words, the Antiochus IV incident was just going to be a dress rehearsal for the real performance, a hint as to what it means to defile the sanctuary. The time in which this brutal scumbag lived could hardly be called “the time of the end.” In the very next chapter (a prophecy given thirteen years later) Daniel was told that the Messiah would come almost 200 years after Antiochus (not in so many words, you understand; you have to do the math). So “the latter time of the indignation” had to refer to something even later.

Note, too, the telling phrase, “**At the appointed time the end shall be.**” Yahweh is telling us in no uncertain terms that He does have a timetable—that He will bring about His purposes as He promised, on His own schedule. That being said, what do you think are the chances of Him *not* revealing that schedule to us somewhere in scripture? I believe He has. In fact, much of the specific and detailed chronological information he revealed about the “appointed time of the end” was transmitted to us through this very prophet, Daniel. The times aren’t “appointed” for God anyway—He lives outside of time’s constraints—they’re for us.

In his next prophecy, Daniel again alluded to the Temple: **“Then he [the prince who will come, i.e., Antichrist] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.** (Daniel 9:27) Sacrifices and offerings to Yahweh could not be made anywhere but the Temple (see Leviticus 17:3-4). And in order for them to be “brought to an end,” they had to be in operation in the first place, which in turn means the Temple had to be there. The Temple didn’t exist in Daniel’s day. It would be rebuilt under Ezra and Zerubbabel, completed in 515 B.C., and extensively remodeled by Herod a generation before Christ’s first-century advent, only to be destroyed again by the Romans in 70 A.D. Since that time, there has been no Temple, no place where Jews could go to make the offerings prescribed in Leviticus to atone for their sins. Fifty generations of Jews have come and gone, dying in their sins for all they knew, because there was no Temple.

A handful of insightful Jews, unable to deal with this paradox but unwilling to believe that Yahweh would leave them in limbo for two thousand years, have followed the trail of prophecy to the cross of Christ. They have learned that the Temple is no longer necessary for the atonement of our sins, because Yahshua became the ultimate sacrifice, the final fulfillment of the Law of Moses. The rest of the Jews either ignore the problem all together, try to explain the conundrum away, or long for the day when the Temple can be rebuilt.

And rebuilt it shall be—just in time to be misused by the Antichrist himself. Though most Jews today couldn’t care less if the Temple ever gets rebuilt, there are several organizations in Israel today whose aim is to bring “the Third Temple” into existence, going so far as to train men as priests and building furnishings and utensils for the Temple they hope will arise. This is not surprising, considering what Paul wrote concerning the Day of Yahweh, **“That Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”** (II Thessalonians 2:3-4) This is the same event we saw in Daniel 9:27, above. In the middle of the seven-year Tribulation, this world leader will call a halt to the recently reinstated Temple sacrifices and declare himself to be God. This will answer the question many Jews will be asking themselves at the time: *who does this guy think he is?* But I’m getting just slightly ahead of myself.

To recap then, two conditions that must exist during the Tribulation are the presence of the Jews in Israel (a present, though endangered, reality) and the

existence of a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem (a deeply suppressed dream for orthodox Jews the world over). A third condition is the existence of a ten-nation confederacy, the Antichrist's power base. Daniel described it like this: **"I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."** (Daniel 7:7-8) The prophet's vision of the "fourth beast" begins with a picture of Rome—the equivalent of his earlier encounter with the legs and feet of Nebuchadnezzar's big statue. But before the words are past his lips, the scene jumps forward to something yet in our future. It's still related to the Roman empire, but there are now ten nations (the ten toes of the statue) within it. As Daniel watches, a "little horn"—an eleventh nation or, more properly, its leader—rises to power. And somehow, three of the first ten nations are destroyed before him. It would seem, based on the language, that these three are merged into the little horn's political empire, for they are "plucked out by the roots." Sounds painful.

Daniel then gets some clarification: **"I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, which devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance was greater than his fellows.... The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom, and another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first ones, and shall subdue three kings."** (Daniel 7:19-20, 23-24)

It's tempting to take a quick look at the map (and an equally quick glance at scripture) and equate today's newly-confederated Europe—the EU, or European Union—with the ten horns in Daniel's vision. But that group already has well over ten member nations, so it would seem that some significant shuffling, consolidating, or splitting would be required if the EU is to become this "new Roman empire." That's not impossible, of course. Treaties and realignments can happen with blinding speed if the "right" man is in power. If you don't believe me, go back and look at how quickly Adolph Hitler swallowed up Austria and Czechoslovakia in 1938. But careful attention to the requirements of scripture will lead us in a slightly different direction. Note that this ten-nation confederacy doesn't necessarily have to be in place for decades before the Tribulation begins—it needn't even be a reality before the rapture.

Some people think that these “ten horns” are *already* historical fact, which only proves that the prophecies are so esoteric, all kinds of theories sound plausible. In the next chapter, we’ll discuss in more detail how the death of the old Roman empire sowed the seeds of a new one—one yet to assume its final form. There, I’ll present my own educated guess as to how the Antichrist’s kingdom will take shape, taking *all* the salient scriptures into account (not just Daniel 7). For now, suffice it to say that a new “kingdom” will emerge, and that it will have some relationship with the historical Roman empire, whether cultural or geographical. It will include ten original political forces (three of whom will probably be *history* by the time the Tribulation begins). The man who will rise to lead it to prominence is the Antichrist himself.

One last condition must be in place before the Day of Yahweh. This one is easy to see coming, for as with Israel’s presence in the Land, it’s already here for all practical purposes. This condition is worldwide apostasy.

Human history is like a locomotive, if I may use a metaphor. A hundred years ago, most people, even Christians, thought the best thing you could do was get on the train. It was apparently heading toward a bright new tomorrow, a land of peace, prosperity, and promise. Destination: utopia! But for those who were paying attention, the 20th century revealed that something was wrong. The train derailed twice, had numerous smaller collisions, and destroyed everything that got near its path. Its billowing smokestack darkened the sky and its sparks set the prairie on fire. Someone loaded its boxcars with pestilence, filth, and high explosives.

The passengers now fall into four categories. Some are fast asleep, lulled into stupor by the pulsating rhythms of normalcy; some are back in the club car, trying to make a killing by cheating each other at poker. Some are glowering at their watches, wishing they were going faster, though they have no idea where the train is headed. And a few passengers—very few—have noticed that the train *has* increased its speed. They watch with growing alarm as the trees and telephone poles whiz past their windows, and slowly come to the grim realization that the engineer is a madman—bent on destroying himself and everyone else on the train in a blaze of glory.

Christians have already gotten off the train. They debarked, if you will, at Philadelphia, opting to become pilgrim pedestrians. But they too are watching its progress with alarm, not for themselves but for the passengers who are still aboard. In the light of Biblical prophecy and common sense, we can see that the

locomotive is out of control. It's doing a hundred miles an hour and picking up speed, approaching the end of the line with the hammer down. We are doing everything we can to get people to wake up, to jump off the train before it's too late. But we're no longer *on* the train—we're not "of the world"—and because of this, it's hard to get people who *are* to listen to us.

Making matters worse are the porters and stewards (our politicians, media, educators, and even some clergy) those whose job it is to make sure the passengers are well informed and well taken care of. The engineer—Satan—has assured them that he has everything under control, and they glibly pass his sentiments on to those few passengers who are beginning to show concern. Whereas they should be running up and down the aisles, waking people up and warning them that they're about to crash, these servants of the crazy engineer instead issue assurances and explanations. They are the very picture of apostasy—a willful ignorance of the danger, a falling away from the truth.

Paul warned us about it. **"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."** (II Timothy 4:3-4) That time is clearly here. We live in what's called the "information age." Everybody, it seems, knows a little bit about most everything. They feel they have a right—even a duty—to keep themselves well enough informed to render an opinion on any subject. But it's also the age of specialization. We often understand our own narrow field to the exclusion of all others, for which we rely upon sound bites from self-appointed "experts." The result is that we are the best-educated, most opinionated, and *shallowest* generation ever to inhabit this planet.

Our appalling lack of depth is our own fault. Truth shines a bright light onto our faults, and that's uncomfortable, so we avoid it. But at the same time, we have "itching ears," a thirst for knowledge (or at least reassurance), so we listen to pundits, prognosticators, politicians—and preachers—who tell us what we want to hear. We can't stand to hear truth, so we settle for fact—information that is not so much lies as it is beside the point.

Some of it, of course, *is* lies. In America especially, we purposely "turn aside to fables." In the interest of separating church from state (a concept that is neither in nor supported by our Constitution) we have for the last half-century systematically moved from recognition that we are all under God, to purposely ignoring Him in our public institutions, to being openly antagonistic toward anything that might imply that a Supreme Deity might even exist. The theory of evolution, taught as fact in our schools, is a perfect example. Though it's just a theory (and one that doesn't mesh very well with the actual scientific data), it is considered the only acceptable explanation for the origin of life because it doesn't

factor God into it. In other words, it's a fable. (Scientists tend to drift toward it because since if the Creator can't be measured, He's beyond the bounds of science, hence He logically must not exist. This kind of reasoning is circular and self-serving.) Ironically, in making the theory of evolution part of our public policy, we have done exactly what we set out to avoid: we have inextricably joined "church" and state. The church here is not Christianity however, or any other recognized religious entity, but the insidious cult of atheistic secular humanism—a faith-based belief system, a *religion* in every sense of the word.

Peter also spoke of the apostates of the last days, in his own meek and Christ-like fashion: **"But these [false teachers], like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. They have forsaken the right way and gone astray.... These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."** (II Peter 2:12-15, 17) Don't hold back, Pete. Tell us what you *really* think. Here is a clear warning to those who would bad-mouth Godly principles: don't "speak evil of things you don't understand." Factor in the reality that God's Word is spiritually discerned—and therefore *can't* be fully understood by those who reject the Holy Spirit—and you end up with a classic catch-22. There's no way to attack God's people without attacking God Himself. I can't help but reflect that as bad as things will be for the "unstable souls" left behind at the rapture, it will be worse for those who had a hand in leading them astray.

Peter went on to say, **"Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to 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 creation.'"** (II Peter 3:3-5) In the days following the rapture, the world's populace will have seen with their own eyes "the promise of His coming," though most won't recognize it as such. Amid the perplexity and fear that follow the event, the underlying assumption of evolutionary theory, that "the past is the key to the future, and we will continue to evolve into more and more wonderful beings until we become like gods, conquering the universe," will sound hollow indeed.

None of this institutionalized falsehood has taken Yahweh by surprise, of course. His prophet Jeremiah spoke of it six centuries before Christ. **"Everyone take heed to his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers. Everyone will deceive his neighbor, and will not speak the truth. They have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity. Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit**

they refuse to know Me,' says Yahweh." (Jeremiah 9:4-6) It's like he just saw one of our newspapers or spent a few hours watching our television programs. Who can deny it? Our "dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit."

Another Old Testament prophet saw where this "refusal to know Yahweh" would lead. Micah wrote: **"Woe is me! For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes. There is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires. The faithful man has perished from the earth, and there is no one upright among men. They all lie in wait for blood; Every man hunts his brother with a net. That they may successfully do evil with both hands—the prince asks for gifts, the judge seeks a bribe, and the great man utters his evil desire; so they scheme together. The best of them is like a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge. The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; Now shall be their perplexity...."** I believe that the prophet is ultimately describing the world immediately after the rapture—from the point of view of those left behind. He begins by observing that everything left is rotten, and the reason is that all of the good people are gone. From this point on, he says, it's every man for himself. The Hebrew word for "perished" is *abad*, meaning to wander away, to lose oneself—a perfect description of the uncertainty, the bewilderment, concerning the missing millions: *The faithful people have wandered away—they're lost to us. Everyone who's left is violent and greedy, even the best of them.*

Then Micah offers some good advice for those left behind. **"Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion. Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom. For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household. Therefore I will look to Yahweh; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me."** (Micah 7:1-7) Now that the Holy Spirit is gone, taking the Ekklesia with Him, you can't trust anybody, not even your spouse or your best friend. There are hints of a "Big-Brother-is-watching" paranoid mentality here, a spirit that will only intensify as Yahshua's ultimate return approaches. There's nothing left to do but repent and wait on Yahweh.

The apostasy that characterizes the last days will be seen most clearly in the religious organizations that are left behind. I can't stress strongly enough that no one in the "Church of Laodicea" will be truly saved at the time of the rapture. This last "Church," rather, is comprised exclusively of those who subsequently repent, those who after that day heed the rebuke of the risen Christ: **"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. You say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...."** This was their condition up to the day of the rapture—lost, apostate, having a religious façade but no spiritual

substance—as they’d say in Texas, they’re all hat and no cattle. Yahshua finds their pretensions sickening.

But as with any lost sheep, He doesn’t give up looking for them, even after He’s taken the rest of the flock home to safety. Yahshua now tells them what to do, and why they should do it. **“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”** (Revelation 3:15-21) At its heart, Christ’s counsel is to stop concentrating on worldly religious trappings, distractions, and side issues, no matter how benign or worthy, and turn instead to Him alone. If they will accept His discipline in a spirit of humbleness and repentance, He will bless them. In other words, they have pretty much the same deal as any of us have, with the exception of our being able to look forward to meeting Him in the air before all the unpleasantness starts.

This end-time apostasy won’t confine itself to “religious” circles, of course. The world at the end of the age will be “as it was in the days of Noah,” or “in the days of Lot.” In other words, society as a whole won’t be concerned with the things of God at all; they’ll be so consumed with trivia they won’t have time for Truth.

The book of Judges closes with what is obviously supposed to be an indictment, an indication of just how out of whack things had gotten: **“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”** I’ve always found it curious that Yahweh considered this a bad thing. At least they weren’t doing what they thought was *wrong*. But that’s precisely the point. They—like this last generation—had forgotten God and His laws, making up their own rules, their own definitions of “right” and “wrong.” *If it feels good, do it*, is the order of the day. The two “great commandments” are now “You shall love *yourself* with all your time, resources, and energy,” and “Love your neighbor, but don’t let her husband catch you.” At one time you could argue that societal pressures kept a lid on the worst of our behaviors. But what happens when society itself falls apart, when the lawfully mandated norm is what Yahweh calls sin?

Paul gave us the answer, and it isn’t pretty. **“And even as [homosexuals] did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them [i.e., ‘men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness’ (v.18)] over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to**

parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:28-32) Does any of this look familiar, or do you live in a cave in a remote Tibetan mountain somewhere? As I said before, these things do not occasionally raise their ugly heads in our present world; they are *characteristic* of the society we live in. They have become the norm.

Christians today are getting a feeling for what Lot experienced as he tried to live his life in Sodom. It’s not easy to avoid smelling like garbage when you live in a dumpster. But Lot’s story isn’t just history. It’s also a warning: **“Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”** (Jude 7) As one insightful wag put it, if God doesn’t come back here and punish our nation, He owes Sodom and Gomorrah a big apology.

My point is not that we should try to change other people’s behavior to suit our own idea of right and wrong. My point is that this apostasy, this falling away from the Truth, is an indication that the world is ripe for judgment—that we are nearing the end, that we are in the “next-to-last” days. Externally suppressing bad behavior is like giving a cancer sufferer an aspirin—it may mask the symptoms temporarily, but without removing the tumor—the curse of sin—the patient is still going to die.

We are not called to be judgmental of the world’s “sinners,” for we all fall into that category. Rather, we are to warn them that God’s judgment is coming. I know, the two things sound quite similar. Yahweh doesn’t want anyone to perish, but there is a limit to His patience. He has clearly stated that He has a timetable. (It’s not *His*, you understand. He lives outside of time—It was designed for us.) Paul asked these people, **“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil.** (Romans 2:4-9) I don’t know how he could make it any clearer. It’s the same kind of choice Moses presented to the children of Israel, but the stakes are even higher this time. They’re eternal.

It seems Paul had the same warning for everyone he talked to. What he wrote to the Romans, he also said to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians: people whose lives are characterized by sin “will not inherit the

kingdom of God.” **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”** (I Corinthians 6:9-11) These are the behaviors we were saved *from*, the filth that the blood of Yahshua has washed off. There is no place for them in God’s kingdom.

We Christians are, as far as God is concerned, spiritual beings. That is, we have been made alive through God’s Spirit living within us. Therefore the “works of the flesh,” those things that we see in the world around us, don’t belong in our lives. **“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** (Galatians 5:19-21) The works of the flesh can’t be performed if we’re no longer living in bodies of flesh, thank God. That’s what the rapture and the subsequent harvests are all about: providing God’s children with incorruptible, immortal, spiritual bodies.

Paul wasn’t through. **“For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** (Ephesians 5:5-6) Looking at these verses in isolation like this, you might get the impression that God’s mercy is in short supply. I can assure you, it’s not. But light and darkness cannot coexist, nor can sin and holiness. A son of Yahweh cannot at the same time be a “son of disobedience.” Yes, we have all fallen into sin. The question is, “Does Yahweh see your sin, or Christ’s atoning blood?” Make no mistake, if our sins aren’t covered by His blood, then God has nothing by which to judge us other than our works. And on His scale of good and bad works, the least little sin is a ton of lead, and the greatest of our good works is a helium balloon. You can’t win this one on your own. **“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.”** (Colossians 3:5-6)

Besides these things that the Bible requires as conditions that will exist during the last days, there are also some things that are suggested in various prophetic

passages, things that until the present generation were either glossed over, assumed to be miraculous, or denied because they were “obviously impossible.” These things now appear to be neither miraculous nor impossible, but merely the byproducts of recently developed technology.

Even this should not be surprising to us, for it too was prophesied. At the end of his long and productive life, Daniel was as confused as ever by the things he had seen and recorded. As an angel (apparently Gabriel, though he isn’t identified here) delivered one last vision, he said, **“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”** (Daniel 12:4) He was telling him, in so many words, “Don’t worry about it, Dan. This information isn’t for you, but for the people who will be living at the end of the age. They will understand it, even if you don’t.” It’s interesting that the angel’s prediction specified transportation and information—the two areas in which mankind has made quantum leaps during the last century or so. Too bad he didn’t say “mercy” and “wisdom.”

As usual, Yahweh didn’t leave His word on the subject in the hands of only one prophet. Jeremiah reported it thus: **“For who has stood in the counsel of Yahweh, and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of Yahweh has gone forth in fury—a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of Yahweh will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.”** (Jeremiah 23:18-20) What probably sounded like hysterical gibberish to the very men who delivered the prophecies will be comprehended so well by those who see their fulfillment that many of them will at first refuse to see the hand of God in any of it, even though He warned them about it several millennia earlier. But in the end, they will understand all too well: **“The anger of Yahweh will not turn back until He has executed the thoughts of His heart.”**

I don’t want to get too far into the specifics of the technology-dependent prophecies now, for we’ll cover them in detail as we get to them. For now, I merely wish to point out that we have never before been in a position to see the fulfillment of these things without the heavy hand of God being involved—in effect *proving* His presence to those who don’t wish to accept His love, or even His reality. Until the very end of the Tribulation, when the Messiah returns in personal glory, Yahweh will require faith from those who seek Him. Remember, if love is forced, it is *not* love, but something else. It therefore makes sense that when the world starts to fall apart, many will see it not as God’s judgment upon the earth, but as the result of man’s own political and environmental folly—or worse, bad luck. (And of course, there’s only one way to fix that: blame it all on the Jews!)

The most obvious recent development portrayed in prophetic scripture is nuclear warfare. The first “trumpet judgment” in Revelation describes it: **“The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.”** (Revelation 8:7) Or how about this scene from the Old Testament: **“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh.”** (Joel 2:30-31)

Considering that neither of these prophets had ever seen an explosion of any kind, these—and scores of other prophetic passages—are remarkably accurate descriptions of nuclear blasts. Ironically, because American atmospheric testing of atomic weapons was halted in 1963, we have a dearth of information about what actually might transpire in a real nuclear war. Could we expect “hail and fire, mingled with blood?” Fire we understand, of course, and “pillars of smoke,” turning “the sun into darkness.” The familiar “mushroom cloud” is typical of nuclear detonations. And we know that nuclear blasts can set up their own small weather systems, like man-made tornadoes. Detonated over population centers, they could be expected to generate not only tornado-like hail, but also to rain down the blood of its victims over a wide area. After an atmospheric test in Nevada in 1957, irate ranchers in South Dakota reported that radioactive debris was carried by a weather system 850 miles from the test site, precipitating pink hail on their ranches and killing their cattle. *Pink hail!*

Let’s look at another bit of end-time technology: **“And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.”** (Revelation 6:8) This doesn’t necessarily mean they were going out with packs of trained man-eating Rottweilers. “Beast” here is the Greek *therion*, a diminutive form of *thera*, a wild, dangerous animal. If I recall correctly, Robert Hooke, upon first viewing bacteria in a microscope in 1665, called them “cavorting beasties.” Yep. Biological warfare. Coming soon to a world near you.

How about, **“He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”** (Revelation 13:16-17) The “mark of the beast” has caused unending speculation over the centuries. But three technological developments from the late twentieth century make the logistics of it eminently doable. First, a universal debit/credit system is a technical possibility today. All it would take to record and manage the identities and financial profiles of virtually every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth is the will (and political clout) to do it. The latest high-speed computers are easily fast enough to handle the load—after all, there are fewer than seven billion of us on the planet (a number that, as we will see, will be

considerably diminished by the time this program is introduced). Moving the information back and forth is a non-issue as well: whether you know it or not, you do it all the time now, every time you use a credit or debit card. The data moves on the Internet, a fast, reliable, and relatively secure conduit of information. That's puzzle piece number two. One to go.

Cash is more or less obsolete. It can be lost, stolen, and counterfeited, it wears out, and it's expensive to manufacture. And it's useless, at least in theory, if you leave your own country. So as we move inexorably toward a one-world government, cash will become a less and less desirable form of money. But credit and debit cards can be stolen as well (and don't kid yourself: your pin number is never more than a swish of the switchblade away from being divulged). So what's the universal personal financial solution? Something you take with you wherever you go, something that can't be lost, stolen, forgotten, faked, or destroyed.

Back in the 1970s, retail store chains started experimenting with something called the Universal Product Code—that little mark with the lines on it you see on most everything you buy. It's read by scanning it with a red laser light beam (which is why you never see them printed in red ink) and can be applied onto any relatively smooth surface. There is no technical reason that a laser-readable eleven- or twelve-digit bar code couldn't be permanently applied onto human skin, tattooed perhaps, preferably somewhere where hair doesn't grow, like the palm of the hand. It could serve the owner as an identification card, passport, credit/debit card, voting permit, parking pass, and house key. More recently, tiny RFID (radio frequency identification) chips have been developed to fill roughly the same needs less obtrusively. They can be applied to products or implanted biometrically to identify individual animals (pets or livestock) or even humans. I don't know for sure what kind of technology will end up being used by the Antichrist's government to implement the "mark of the Beast," but it's clear that with the technology existing today, he would have his pick of methods.

Of course, once you've got the "Mark," its privileges could be cut off in a heartbeat by the people who control the database, if they decide you're out of line with their agenda. (Oops.) On the other hand, if you refuse to take the Mark in the first place, you'll be a non-person, ostracized and shut out of society. Maybe it's not such a hot idea after all. But that doesn't mean it won't happen.

Let's look at another end-time event that couldn't have happened without a miracle more than a few years ago: **"Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see [the two messengers'] dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow**

their dead bodies to be put into graves. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.” (Revelation 11:9-10) Forget for the moment what they’re looking at and why. Consider *how*. Before the age of either satellite television or the Internet, (neither of which is, in any practical sense, more than ten or twelve years old as I write these words) the capability of people all over the earth seeing two guys lying dead on the streets of Jerusalem—in real time—was impossible. But if they happen to be at the wailing wall when they’re killed—which is a distinct possibility—people will be able to see them from their computer terminals anywhere on earth. I just checked the web cam: it’s 11:25 PM in Jerusalem, and I counted nine black hats in the big square in front of the wall. No bodies lying on the ground. Yet.

Even if they’re not considerate enough to die where somebody has a 24-hour Internet camera set up, these two witnesses will be so unpopular that their unsung and unburied corpses will be still be making the TV news three days after they’re killed. And the whole world will be able to watch it all live (if you’ll pardon the expression) thanks to a technology that got off the ground on July 10, 1962. That’s when Telstar I, the world’s first commercial communications satellite, was launched. But world-wide real-time television didn’t become a practical reality until the first DSS satellite was launched in December, 1993. Today, of course, we can’t seem to remember a time when we didn’t have it.

While we’re on the subject of these two witnesses, note that they will **“have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.”** (Revelation 11:6) Remember back in Exodus, when Moses was demonstrating Yahweh’s power to Pharaoh? His court magicians showed up and duplicated some of the signs (or at least convinced their boss that they had). I foresee a similar scenario happening with these two witnesses, with similar results. Whereas their signs are given by God as a warning to repent, the world’s powers will come forward and explain that they have technology to do that too. No, its worse than that. They have *already* come forward....

A feasibility study, presented to the United States Air Force back in 1996, was prepared “to examine the concepts, capabilities, and technologies the United States will require to remain the dominant air and space force in the future.” The authors confidently predicted that by the year 2025, they would be able to manipulate the weather to their advantage in the battlefield. The title of the study was *Weather as a Force Multiplier: Owning the Weather in 2025*.

Their stated goals were developing the ability to degrade opposing military forces by doing things like flooding enemy-held territory to reduce their communication effectiveness and comfort level, in turn lowering morale, or

conversely, inducing drought conditions, restricting access to badly needed local fresh water sources. They might remove fog and clouds, denying the enemy the cover of weather conditions, or conversely, they could generate fog or clouds to conceal themselves when the strategy demanded it. But normally, they would make the weather nice in their own territory, removing fog to keep their airfields open, keeping visibility levels good and comfort and morale high.

The “weather” in space was considered as well, with the goal of disrupting or enhancing radar and communications, intercepting enemy transmissions and destroying their satellites. And here’s the kicker: part of the program is detecting and defending against our *enemies*’ weather-manipulation technologies. What? You didn’t think *we* were the only ones crazy enough to ponder madness like this, did you?

Did I say ponder? Silly me. Our military geniuses (and theirs) are actually building the technology to make this a reality. The Air Force report says, “Current technologies that will mature over the next 30 years will offer anyone who has the necessary resources the ability to modify weather patterns and their corresponding effects, at least on the local scale. Current demographic, economic, and environmental trends will create global stresses that provide the impetus necessary for many countries or groups to turn this weather-modification ability into a capability.”

It goes on to say, “In the United States, weather-modification will likely become a part of national security policy with both domestic and international applications. Our government will pursue such a policy, depending on its interests, at various levels. These levels could include unilateral actions, participation in a security framework such as NATO, membership in an international organization such as the UN, or participation in a coalition. Assuming that in 2025 our national security strategy includes weather-modification, its use in our national military strategy will naturally follow. Besides the significant benefits an operational capability would provide, another motivation to pursue weather-modification is to deter and counter potential adversaries.”

You can just see these guys drooling over their shiny new weapon: “Appropriate application of weather-modification can provide battlespace dominance to a degree never before imagined. In the future, such operations will enhance air and space superiority and provide new options for battlespace shaping and battlespace awareness. The technology is there, waiting for us to pull it all together....”

The technology is *already there*? Of course it is. These military guru types don’t risk their careers on wishful thinking and blue-sky speculation. On the contrary, the military leaders of both our nation and our potential adversaries are

usually conservative to a fault. They wouldn't promise the end of life on earth as we know it—excuse me, “battlespace dominance”—by 2025 unless they were pretty sure they could deliver. Our scientists are so clever they have already deployed an electromagnetic weather altering system called HAARP (“High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program”—part of SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative) in Alaska, ostensibly to do wonderful things like attacking air pollution, especially chlorofluorocarbons, and altering upper atmospheric ozone levels. Not to be outdone, the Russians are fooling around with something called “Woodpecker,” their version of a weather engineering system that uses electromagnetic radio waves to redirect high altitude wind patterns. The idea, apparently proven to be workable, is to “steer the jet stream.” But they've discovered that it could also be used to disrupt electronic communication worldwide. Cool, huh? Can you imagine the U.S. and Russia duking it out with these systems? Before long, other nations would be feverishly working on their own versions: Iran, North Korea, *France!* (Actually, rumor has it that Israel already has one.)

These technologies are the outgrowth of the work of Nikola Tesla (1856-1943), the Serbian-American inventor whose discoveries in the field of alternating polyphase current electricity were foundational to our whole electricity-dependent way of life. His 700 patents covered such breakthroughs as fluorescent light, the wireless transmission of electrical energy, radio, and electronic remote control. Tesla discovered that the earth behaves as a global electrical grid, pulsing at an extremely low frequency (ELF), very precise and very constant. By artificially generating ELF waves at the same frequency, scientists could, he hypothesized, control all of the weather and tectonic functions of the earth. It's all a matter of harnessing the immense energy that's already there.

Tectonic functions? Yes, that too. HAARP ELF transmissions have the potential ability to create earthquakes on demand, anywhere we want. (This HAARP capability was the premise of the 2003 sci-fi blockbuster movie *The Core*.) In fact, the paranoid lunatic fringe of our scientific community believes it's already happened. They also see evidence that HAARP and Woodpecker signals have changed our weather patterns, creating unprecedented rainfall or droughts in various places. These same scientists fear that ELF technology is capable of magnifying and focusing sunlight (they call it “skybusting”), burning holes through the earth's protective ozone layer—hey, what a nifty weapon *that* would be. They say it might even be capable of controlling the thoughts or emotions of people, by adjusting the ELF bombardment to the frequencies the human brain employs. These scientists may be paranoid, but that doesn't necessarily mean they're wrong.

The holy grail of Tesla technology, however, would be to create nuclear-sized explosions without generating any radiation. It's a military man's dream: no missiles, warheads, or fallout. Just redirect the earth's energy to someplace you don't like very much, push the button, and poof! No more Baghdad, New York, or Paris. Impossible? If you say so. But you should be aware that this very process is now protected under HAARP's U.S. Patent number 4,873,928.

My point is not that we are in the hands of mad scientists who will soon have the capability—not to mention the arrogance—to destroy the earth while attempting to gain a military advantage. (This may be true, but it's not my point.) I just want you to understand that the divine judgments that are prophesied to come upon the earth are not necessarily all miraculously God-generated, like thunderbolts from Zeus being thrown down from Mount Olympus. Rather, the "wrath of God" may in large measure be nothing more than Yahweh stepping out of the picture and letting us run the world ourselves for a few years (something He has never done since He created it), giving the human race enough rope with which to hang itself. Yahshua himself said that **"unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."** (Matthew 24:22) If Yahweh were "throwing all the thunderbolts," I suspect He wouldn't have to make adjustments in the schedule to save His elect remnant.

But even if Yahweh *is* pulling the strings of judgment Himself, there will still be the plausible deniability factor. In other words, if unrepentant man can imagine "natural causes" for all the torment he's going through, he will still be able to talk himself out of believing that there is a God. Delusion dies hard.

I'd like to pose a riddle. In the following four passages (among hundreds I could have quoted), what late 20th century technology is being suggested as a condition for future prophetic fulfillment?

"It shall come to pass in that day that Yahweh shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left, from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar, from Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, And Judah shall not harass Ephraim." (Isaiah 11:11-13)

"Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not keep them

back! Bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 43:5-6)

“Thus says Yahweh, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (Yahweh is His name): ‘If those ordinances depart from before Me,’ says Yahweh, ‘then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever... If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done,’ says Yahweh.” (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

“For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as grain is sifted in a sieve; yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.” (Amos 9:9)

Stumped? I’ll give you a hint. It’s a language, one we have just recently begun to understand—the very language that Yahweh used when He spoke life into being (Genesis 1:11, 20, 24). It’s DNA—the genetic structure of life itself.

You’re probably wondering, “What on earth does the science of genetics have to do with the Jews’ return to their promised land?” Ask yourself this: what is a Jew (or more properly, an Israelite)? Who is God talking about when He says, **“I will bring your descendants...from the ends of the earth”**? The simple answer is “all of the descendants of Jacob/Israel.” That’s a fine definition in theory, but it gets a bit more complicated in the real world. Most people today can say with some degree of certainty, “I am a Jew,” or “I am a gentile—a non-Jew.” But the actual genealogical records that could prove it are gone, and have been since 70 A.D. All they have to go by is family traditions and histories.

Complicating the search for the true Israel is the fact that the culture and/or religion of the Jews has become inextricably intertwined with their genetic identity. Thus one whose maternal grandmother was a gentile woman who married a Jewish man and adopted his culture and religion could easily believe he’s a son of Israel when he’s not. And one whose Jewish great grandparents six times removed converted to Islam to keep themselves alive back in the days of the Ottoman Turks may be totally unaware of his Jewish bloodline. The only reason most of us know whether or not we’re Jewish is because of our heritage, our personal family knowledge, our oral traditions if you will. Not usually the most reliable of evidence.

Yahweh, of course, being the inventor of the language of DNA (and still the only One who knows how to read and write this extremely complex dialect) knows which of us are among his chosen people Israel and which are not. But I have reason to believe that God’s not the only one who’s interested. We talked briefly about the Temple being restored sometime during the last days. The Torah explicitly states that among the Jews, only the tribe of Levi are given the privilege of performing certain worship-related duties, and among Levites, only the

descendants of Aaron may serve in the Temple as priests (Exodus 40:15, etc.). Who are these people?

Amazingly, today's Jews seem to know. They call them Cohanim—the plural of Cohen. These people are presumed to be of Israel's priestly family, that of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi. The line of the Cohanim is patrilineal, i.e., it's passed from father to son. Jewish tradition insists that the line has gone on without interruption for over three millennia, for over a hundred generations. In other words, today's Jews think they still know who their priests are. But are their oral traditions accurate? DNA analysis can go a long way toward answering that question.

An organism's complete set of DNA is called its genome. The smallest known genome for a free-living organism (a bacterium) contains about 600,000 DNA base pairs, whereas human genomes have something like 3 billion. All human cells (except for mature red blood cells) contain a complete genome.

Human DNA is arranged into 24 distinct chromosomes, large molecules that range from about 50 million to 250 million base pairs. Each chromosome contains many genes, the building blocks of our heredity—specific sequences of bases that encode instructions on how to make proteins. Only about 2% of the human genome is made up of genes; the rest is non-coding DNA. The human genome is estimated to contain between 30,000 and 40,000 genes.

Genetic markers are variations in the nucleotide sequence of DNA—in other words, mutations. When mutations occur within genes, they usually cause a malfunction or disease and are therefore weeded out in succeeding generations. But non-lethal mutations found in the so-called “non-coding regions” of the DNA tend to remain and build up in the genome. Therefore, since the Y chromosome (that which makes men males) consists mostly of non-coding DNA, it tends to accumulate genetic markers. A combination of these neutral mutations, known as a haplotype, can serve as a genetic signature of a man's male ancestry. The Y chromosome is passed from father to son without recombination, so the genetic information within the Y chromosome of a man living today can be expected to be pretty much the same as that of his ancient male ancestors.

Just as Y chromosome genetic markers are indicative of a male's ancestry, maternal genealogies can be traced by means of m-DNA, or mitochondrial DNA, which is inherited only from the mother. This is important because according to Talmudic tradition, a person's Jewish status is determined by the mother, but tribal membership follows the father's line. That is, a Jew is someone who is born of a Jewish Mother, even if the father is not Jewish, but not vice-versa. Thus (according to the theory) there is no such thing as being part Jewish. A Jew's tribe, clan, or family is determined by the father's heritage, but obviously, a baseline requirement must be that he's a real Jew, i.e., that his mother was Jewish.

(I don't know if God agrees with the Talmud on this point, but it's worth noting that by this definition, Yahshua was a Jew even though he had no human biological father, since His mother was Jewish. And He was of the tribe of Judah, of the royal line of David and Solomon because Joseph, his legal father, was.)

Genetic studies of diverse present-day Jewish communities show a remarkable degree of genetic cohesiveness. Jews from Iran, Iraq, Yemen, North Africa and Europe cluster together with other Semitic groups, and they all have a common geographical origin in the Middle East. Even more significant, a collection of genetic markers known as the Cohen Modal Haplotype (CMH) has been recognized by researchers as the standard DNA signature of what they presume to be the Jewish priestly family. Significantly, there is a good correlation between the CMH profile and the family traditions of the Cohanim, identifying certain Jewish males as “priest material.”

Admittedly, there are no legal ramifications surrounding the Cohen Modal Haplotype—yet. Nobody today is being certified or disqualified because of their Y chromosome markers. But the Temple doesn't exist, either; the Levitical sacrifices are nothing more than dimly remembered and half-understood rituals. On the other hand, the day is yet young.

The Jews living after the rapture will not be the only ones interested in their Jewishness. What is today a mere exercise in “genetic archaeology” could easily become something far more sinister in the near future. Today, 1.3 billion people—about one fifth of the world's total population—follow (at least nominally) a doctrine whose manifesto demands that they kill every Jew on the planet (while enslaving everybody else). As the first Islamic historian, al-Tabari, reported, “The morning after the murder of Ashraf, the Prophet declared, ‘Kill any Jew who falls under your power.’” Or as Bukhari, another early chronicler of Islam, writes, Muhammad said, “Just issue orders to kill every Jew in the country.” But as Hitler and Stalin so convincingly demonstrated, one needn't be a follower of Islam to hate Jews for no apparent reason. So ask yourself: what are the world's thirteen million Jews going to do when they wake up one morning and find all of the real Christians gone? Will life go on as usual? I think not. Evangelical Christians—defined more accurately as the Ekklesia of Philadelphia (see Revelation 3:7-13)—living mostly in America, are the only real ally Israel has today. When we are gone—and we *are* going—support for Israel, and for Jews worldwide, will evaporate.

Consider this scenario: the Antichrist, having gained a position of power and influence in Europe, proposes a humanitarian solution to the worldwide anti-Semitic rage that has emerged following the rapture. He can't protect the Jews if they're scattered all over the world, he says, but if they were all together in their own land—Israel—then he could, and would, guarantee their safety and

sovereignty. Most of the world agrees at once, liking the idea of ridding of the Jews from their midst once and for all without having blood on their hands. The house of Islam—after the shock has worn off—announces that they too are in favor of this formula for world peace. Of course, what they’re really thinking is, “If we can get them all together in one place, we can destroy them in one shot with nukes, bio-chemical superweapons, or the biggest invasion the world has ever seen.” They’ll vote yes, but only because Muhammad told them it was acceptable for them to lie if it helped them kill the enemies of Allah and his Prophet (peace be unto him). A few texts from the Islamic scriptures will confirm this. *Bukhari*: “The Prophet said, ‘If I take an oath and later find something else better than that, then I do what is better and expiate my oath.’” *Qur’an* 9:3 “Allah and His Messenger dissolve obligations.” *Qur’an* 66:1 “Allah has already sanctioned for you the dissolution of your vows.” *Bukhari*: “Allah’s Apostle said, ‘War is deceit.’” *Qur’an* 4:142 “Surely the hypocrites strive to deceive Allah. He shall retaliate by deceiving them.” Muhammad assured his followers that they were not bound to honor treaties they’d made with infidels. How convenient.

Okay, so in our hypothetical scenario, how can all the world’s Jews be brought back to Israel? Step one is verifying their identity. As we’ve seen, just saying (or even *thinking*) you’re a Jew or gentile doesn’t necessarily make it so. The Jews themselves say that “Jewishness” is dependent upon your mother’s identity—if she was a Jew, you are too. The key, then, is in the DNA—and if the Rabbis are correct, specifically in mitochondrial DNA, the part passed from mother to daughter.

All it would take is the will to do it. Of course, profiling the whole population looking for racial characteristics would be politically incorrect—even liberals could smell the genocidal overtones in that one—so its more likely the operation would proceed under the guise of a universal DNA database, a way of establishing every person’s “genetic fingerprint” from the moment of birth. If you think about it, what better tool could law enforcement agencies have with which to fight crime—everything from solving murders to preventing fraud. Not surprisingly, this very thing is now being proposed in some scientific circles.

I’m not saying the Bible predicts that DNA profiling will be used to round up the Jews and herd them all to Israel. But you’ve got to admit, the scenario fits the prophesied facts like a glove. At the very least, we now have the technology to confirm what God’s word predicted three thousand years ago: all the Jews will, sooner or later, return to their promised land from the nations to which they’ve been scattered.

If you look closely, there's another unprecedented development suggested in last-days Biblical prophecy. All through history, nations have, quite naturally, done what was in their own self-perceived interests. When they've formed alliances, they've invariably been temporary, fragile, and limited in scope. As often as not, such alliances have ended with one nation gobbling up its weaker ally (as in Persia assimilating Media, Nazi Germany engulfing Austria, or Imperial Rome woofing down everybody who was anywhere near the Mediterranean).

So the United Nations, at first glance, comes as a bit of a surprise. After almost six thousand years of looking out for number one, the world has finally decided that it's in its own collective self-interest to try to get along. It took one false start (the ill-fated League of Nations), two world wars, the advent of atomic holocaust, and the unrelenting labor of the Prince of Darkness for a couple of centuries to make it happen, but the United Nations was born on October 24, 1945.

We shouldn't be terribly surprised at this development. The Bible speaks often of "the nations," as if they were one entity, i.e., everybody but Israel. (The Hebrew word translated "nation" is usually *goy* (plural: *goyim*), which means a gentile, heathen, nation, or people.) For instance, **"When Yahweh brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, 'Yahweh has done great things for them.'" (Psalm 126:1-2)** This very thing happened on the floor of the United Nations on November 29, 1947, when they authorized a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Or at least, it should have: the nations have yet to give Yahweh any credit. We're still waiting for that.

Some would say that the reason the U.N. prevailed when the League of Nations flopped was its provision for making war (invariably called "peace keeping" these days—go figure.) The prophets saw that coming, too: **"The noise of a multitude in the mountains, Like that of many people! A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! Yahweh of hosts, musters the army for battle."** (Isaiah 13:4) That's right. Yahweh Himself has made it possible for the whole world to get together and fight Him and His chosen people if they want to.

And the time is coming when they *will* want to. The Psalmist paints this pathetic picture for us: **"Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.'** God, of course, is not impressed with their pitiful rantings. **"He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; Yahweh shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: 'Yet I have set My King on My holy**

hill of Zion.' I will declare the decree: Yahweh has said to Me [i.e., to His Messiah], 'You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel....'"

The Psalmist finishes with some good advice to the nations: "Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve Yahweh with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him." (Psalm 2) This is the first hint we have that all the world's nations will try to join forces to defeat Yahweh. It won't work.

David prophesied concerning the nations' rebellion. "The nations have sunk down in the pit which they made; In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught...." And then he prayed, "Arise, O Yahweh; do not let man prevail. Let the nations be judged in Your sight. Put them in fear, O Yahweh, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah." (Psalm 9:15, 19-20)

Isaiah saw it coming as well. "Woe to the multitude of many people who make a noise like the roar of the seas, and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! ...But God will rebuke them and they will flee far away, and be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind, like a rolling thing before the whirlwind." (Isaiah 17:12-13) For all the noise they make, Yahweh is apparently not impressed with the combined military might of the United Nations. Though they flow against Him like a mighty river, they will be dammed (or is that *damned?*)

Could it be that the Battle of Armageddon will be a United Nations affair? It sure sounds likely. "For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there." (Joel 3:1-2) We're going to have to defer the subject of Armageddon until our timeline catches up, of course. Right now, we're just looking at the setup—the unprecedented gathering of "all nations" for war.

Not convinced that the United Nations is being prophesied? Let's consult another prophet. "Wait for Me,' says Yahweh, 'until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy.'" (Zephaniah 3:8) Where's that Security Council veto when you need it? Where are all those diplomats that consistently maintain that all war is bad. This time there are no dissenting voices. *Let's all go to Israel and teach those warmongering Jews a lesson once and for all.*

As long as we're already so far ahead of our story, let's take a peek at what happens to the U.N. *after* the Battle of Armageddon. The nations have changed their tune, it appears. Their armies are now buzzard bait, but Israel still stands tall. In fact, they are now the world's only superpower! **"You have delivered me [Israel] from the strivings of the people; You have made me the head of the nations; A people I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me they obey me; the foreigners submit to me. The foreigners fade away, and come frightened from their hideouts."** (Psalm 18:43-45)

God's purpose, however, is not so much to punish the nations as it is to draw them to Himself. Once He has reestablished a repentant Israel, it is Yahweh's wish (and prediction) that all nations (whatever's left of them) will honor the true and living God for a thousand years in the hills of Jerusalem. It is only then, after all the battles have been fought, that the last of the world's Jews will be brought to their promised land—in love and honor this time, and not, as before, as a deceitful prelude to intended genocide. They will be relocated as "an offering to Yahweh." **"It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to Yahweh out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,"** says Yahweh, **"as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh."** (Isaiah 66:18-20)

In the chapters to come, we will trace the details of how Yahweh will accomplish all this—the complete upending of the world's established order and the establishment in its place of Israel as the center of world power under their Eternal King, Yahshua. We will see how technology, apostasy, the rise of Islam, nuclear and bio-chemical warfare, famine, plague, political upheaval, and "natural" disaster will all play their parts in God's eventual restoration of the earth to a state of pristine peace. Through these events, Yahweh will achieve nothing less than the renewed holiness of planet earth—the separation and removal of all things evil, and the setting apart and establishment of all that is good. The government will at last rest upon the shoulders of the Prince of Peace.

Yahshua told His disciples to look for the signs heralding the Last Days, signs that, like the inevitable budding of fig leaves as summer approaches, will tell us that the day of His coming is drawing near. We have done as He said: we have examined the fig tree. And there can be no doubt. Summer is almost here.