

Chapter 24

Armageddon!

It's coming down to this: a final confrontation between a human race that refuses to walk with God and the God who created it for no other purpose. A passage that originally foretold Babylon's coming invasion of Judah also appears to describe the final battle. Isaiah describes this gathering of the nations: **"I have commanded My sanctified ones; I have also called My mighty ones because of My anger—Those who rejoice in My exaltation...."** The English totally misses it here. This literally means: "Those who exult in their arrogant pride."

God has set apart those who would trouble His people for His own purposes—in this case, destruction. **"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. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven—Yahweh and His weapons of indignation, to destroy the whole land."** (Isaiah 13:3-5) The word "land" here is our old friend *eretz*, which if you'll recall, has a broad range of possible meanings—earth, world, country, land, country, or ground. Two armies are being gathered: one from the "kingdoms of nations" and another from "the end of heaven"—i.e., the previously raptured saints (see Matthew 24:31). It's time for a showdown.

John saw the same thing, focusing on the armies of the East. **"Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."** (Revelation 16:12-14) If you'll recall, a severe drought has been plaguing the earth ever since the two witnesses were given the **"power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy."** (Revelation 11:6) As that time progressed, the major rivers of the world (or at least the region) have been reduced to rivulets. Now, when it suits God's purpose, the Euphrates dries up altogether.

Yahweh's primary purpose for this is to summon the nations who want to confront Him. But there's more to it, in the grand scheme of things. **"Yahweh will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make men cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt."** (Isaiah 11:15-16) Part of His plan is to facilitate the return of the Jews to the land of Israel. Here we see both

the Nile and the Euphrates being dried up enough to cross over without getting your feet wet. Between the lines, we can almost smell the anti-Semitism that's driving this last Jewish migration. The "tongue of the Sea of Egypt" is apparently the Gulf of Suez.

The prophet Nahum sheds more light on the connection between Yahweh's anger and a drought so severe that rivers and seas dry up. **"God is jealous, and Yahweh avenges; Yahweh avenges and is furious. Yahweh will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies; Yahweh is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. Yahweh has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts."** (Nahum 1:2-4) Even the areas known in Nahum's day as the garden spots of the Levant, Bashan, Carmel, and Lebanon, will "wither" under God's fury. There'll be a super-drought, but it's not like there won't be any "weather." Violent whirlwinds will stir up great clouds of dust, but no rain will fall.

As I said, Yahweh's primary purpose in drying up the rivers is to bring the armies of the world to Israel for the ultimate showdown. The "kings from the East" mentioned in our Revelation 16 passage are the same Chinese warlords who've been tearing up the Far East ever since the sixth angel blew his trumpet. This army began its march some months previously at an unheard of strength of two hundred million soldiers. They have now achieved their demon-inspired goal of subduing the entire East—ostensibly for the greater glory of the Dragon, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, as well as for their own temporal advantage.

By the way, have you ever noticed the undying connection between Chinese culture and dragons? The Chinese have been known to refer to themselves as *Lung Tic Chuan Ren*, or "descendants of the dragon." This is the outgrowth of a legend that the *Huang Di* (Yellow Emperor) used a serpent in his coat of arms, and whenever he conquered a neighboring tribe, he would incorporate the defeated enemy's symbol into his own. This explains why the dragon is said to have the head of camel, the face of a qilin (a deer-like mythical creature with a body of fire), the eyes of a demon, the ears of a cow, the antlers of a stag, the neck of a snake, the belly of a clam, and the claws of an eagle on the feet a tiger. The whole thing is supposedly covered with 117 scales from a carp. If you're attuned to clues of its satanic identity, it gets even more interesting: the dragon is said to be able to fly through the sky. (Does the phrase "prince of the power of the air" ring any bells?) The dragon is also associated with weather and water—he is the bringer of rain. The three and a half year drought during the great Tribulation, therefore, is quite possibly sent by Yahweh (in part) to prove that the dragon has no real power. Chinese dragons are said to be able to transform their shape and size, and they are invariably pictured in association with a flaming pearl, which I

take to be a permutation of Luciferian sun worship—the symbology is identical. This “pearl” is supposedly what gives the dragon his ability to ascend to heaven.

Anyway, we were talking about the demon-led Chinese army of Revelation 16. They’ve been waging war on greater Asia, and in the process, they’ve killed over one and a half billion people. Now the unholy trinity is beckoning them to come west—to the land of Israel—to face one final foe. The Eastern Horde won’t have to face this dangerous enemy alone, however. Virtually every nation on earth who can put together a fighting force is summoned by the Antichrist, via his one-world government, to join the fight—and they all answer the call. It’s a coalition the likes of which the elder President Bush could only have dreamed in 1991. Actually, the first Gulf War will serve nicely as a prototype for the build-up: the nations of the earth will rise up in unified rage against a common foe. Of course, after the horrendous carnage of the past seven years, convincing the world that they all of a sudden have a common all-powerful enemy to fight might be a bit difficult. But three frog-like demons help to deliver the message, showing signs and wonders to the “kings of the earth,” persuading them that the threat is real. *Ribbit.*

Yahweh is anticipating this last confrontation as well, commanding the Euphrates to dry up so that the mighty Eastern army may advance without hindrance. Nothing must stand in the way of their “glorious destiny.” Do the armies of the earth know Who they’re taking on? Will the demon-frogs croak out anything resembling the truth? Don’t bet on it; they’re working for the father of lies. I would be extremely surprised if they said something like, *You must come to Israel with your army because Yahshua, the risen Son of Almighty God—Yahweh in the flesh—is about to return to earth to reign in glory, just like the Jewish and Christian scriptures said He would. So we’ve gotta stop Him! It’s a long shot, but if we put together a big enough coalition, we might be able to persuade Him to go away. What do you say? Are you with us?*

No, the truth clearly isn’t going to cut it. So what will the official line be? Who will be identified as the enemy? I can envision two possible scenarios, neither of which is actually possible (never mind rational), but either of which might be swallowed whole by a lost and gullible world if delivered with the right spin—which is precisely the job description of the three bad froggies.

Scenario #1. “We’re not alone.” In an attempt to explain all the recent weirdness—the rapture (though they won’t call it that), the still-unexplained destruction of Gog’s Muslim hordes, the mysterious lack of rain, dead oceans, scorching sun, and darkened skies, etc.—the Antichrist’s people will blame *space aliens* for the earth’s unprecedented troubles. They’ll dredge up persistent legends from generations of “UFOlogists” and offer convincing proof that it was all true after all. Wrecked flying saucers, cryogenically preserved corpses of alien crash

victims from Area 51, and newly revealed “evidence,” supposedly suppressed for decades by the American and Russian military establishments, will mysteriously surface. Strange lights will appear in the sky, seen not by a handful of UFO enthusiasts this time, but by millions of ordinary people. And through a series of televised addresses, the Antichrist will explain with candor and forthrightness (choke) that he’s discovered that the world’s previous governments had been holding out on them: an alien force from a distant solar system has arrived with the express purpose of colonizing earth for themselves. It’s a hostile takeover on a global scale. The inhabitants of earth must therefore band together to fight them. It’s the only chance for the survival of mankind.

Okay, it sounds stupid. But with half to three-quarters (or more) of the earth’s population already dead, and those remaining already primed for the next worldwide disaster, this explanation just might fly (if you’ll pardon the expression). However, since Satan’s up to his eyeballs in this thing, a second scenario, even dumber than the first, is more likely to be foisted upon the populace, a hypothesis that could only be hatched by someone who envies Yahweh with every fiber of his being.

Scenario #2. “Hitler was right.” *It’s those @!#\$%&* Jews!* The Antichrist will announce that because he had the foresight to set up his world headquarters in the Holy Land, he was in a unique position to discover what the Jews, especially the Israelis, have *really* been up to since the Zionists had their moment in the sun in 1948. They’ve been developing, he will claim, secret weapons, WMDs whose ultimate purpose is to wipe the goyim off the face of the earth! *How were they able to overcome sixty-to-one odds, defeating the Arabs on their birthday in ’48—and again in 1967—and again in 1973?* (The fact that they had come within a whisker of losing that last one will be conveniently forgotten.) *They had secret weapons, that’s how. These people may be evil, but they’re not dumb: Einstein was a Jew, wasn’t he? Ever since Adolph Hitler failed to wipe them out in the 1940s, they’ve been plotting their revenge on the world. Now they’ve got weapons that can destroy the ozone layer, kill off every living thing in the oceans, stop the rain, and turn the sky to smoke. You saw what they did to the poor Muslims when they heroically tried to come to the aid of their oppressed Palestinian brothers. I don’t know how the Jews killed them, but they murdered so many it took ’em seven months to bury the dead. Now their bioweapons have infected the whole world, causing these cursed boils to infect all the good, law-abiding citizens who received my Mark of Loyalty. They refused to sign on—preferring to hide in exile like cringing cowards. But that was more than three years ago. I now have indisputable evidence that they’re planning their return to Palestine—and that they intend to use this land as a base from which to annihilate the whole gentile world! We must stop them while there’s still time!*

The Jews, of course, will be quite surprised to hear all this. As far as they can tell, they're hanging on by their fingernails. They've got no power at all—no government, no weapons, no supplies except the stuff they were able to hastily salvage from the armies of Gog. What they *do* have is a newfound relationship with Yahweh, for they have been living every day of the last forty-two months in the knowledge that without His constant protective hand, they would have been ground to powder in the Antichrist's machine. Every new sunrise is a miracle.

When does all this happen? It takes months for any good-sized fighting force to be assembled and moved into position, so it may be assumed that the sixth bowl is not so much an event as a process. The Antichrist could well issue his worldwide call to arms six months or even a year before the actual battle. But I suspect the Euphrates will only be dry enough for a major army to cross dry-shod right around day 2,490 of the Tribulation. That's 1,260 days (forty-two months) after the Jews began their flight from their homeland in panic after witnessing the abomination of desolation. It's thirty days from the end, though they doubtless won't know that. The Jews will begin to return to Jerusalem at this same time, but the Antichrist, having seen what happened to those who attacked them in the past, will do nothing to stop them. On the contrary, he's hoping they *all* return—it's his only chance of wiping them out in one decisive move—with the odds not sixty to one this time, but *six thousand* to one. He's still smarting from the spanking he got as his troops pursued the Israelis into the wilderness only to be swallowed by the desert (Revelation 12:16), and he'll never completely come to terms with the defeat of Magog in Israel, something he tried to do and failed miserably.

Precisely what kind of offensive is he planning this time? Let's pick up the narrative back in Revelation: **“Behold, I [Yahshua] am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.’ And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”** (Revelation 16:15-16) The “they” in the last sentence are the three demonic frogs we met in verse 13 above. Persuasive little vermin. The “them” are, as it says in verse 14, **“the kings of the earth and of the whole world.”** “Earth” and “world” are two separate and unrelated words in Greek (*ge* and *oikoumene*). I believe John's purpose in this rather odd-sounding phrase was to communicate that the men who control both the habitable land mass of earth *and* the people who live there will be represented by their armies at Armageddon—the implication is total commitment to the Antichrist's cause.

“Armageddon” is a word that has picked up a lot of baggage in its long and colorful life—most of it belonging to somebody else. This is the only time in all of scripture the word is used, and as the text implies, it is actually derived from two Hebrew words. *Har* is a mountain or range of hills. *Megiddow* is an ancient city in northern Israel (Megiddo), midway between Mount Gilboa and Mount

Carmel, about twenty miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee. It overlooks the Valley of Jezreel, a.k.a. the Plain of Esdraelon, which is about fourteen miles wide and twenty miles long. It has been the scene of many battles in the past, as far back as the Biblical era of the Judges, when in 1480 B.C. Thutmose III of Egypt met and defeated the King of Kadesh (in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley). The intriguing thing about *Megiddo* is its etymological origin—the word from which it is derived means “rendezvous.”

Armies from all over the world are converging on Israel—summoned by the Antichrist but *persuaded* by three frog-like demons. They're apparently very good at their jobs, for in common parlance, the word Armageddon has come to mean a doomsday war—the end of the world. If you were a military commander living in such weird times and you were told to ship your troops out to someplace called “Megiddo,” wouldn't that give you pause? Millions of people on this side of the rapture know precisely where the Battle of Armageddon is supposed to take place and what will happen there. Will that information be lost to *everyone* when the Church is taken out?

Then again, I wouldn't be surprised to see the Antichrist cleverly sucking the terror out of the word by actually naming his plan “Operation Armageddon,” as if it were just one more grandiose plan foisted on a jaded populace with marketing savvy and fancy political footwork—like Saddam's “Mother of all Battles.” All I know is that the armies will come—vast, teeming hordes single-mindedly determined to defend the earth against a common enemy—the ultimate enemy. How many will come? The Bible doesn't say, but if each soldier were allotted thirty square feet, a quarter *billion* of them would fit in the Plain of Esdraelon alone. Scripture, by the way, doesn't say that all the combatants will be squeezed into the valley, or even that Armageddon is where the battle will occur. It only suggests that *Har-Megiddo* is the primary destination—the rendezvous point. The assembling armies could well spill out onto the coastal plains to the north and south, or even farther.

And what was that enigmatic admonition we saw shoehorned in sideways there? **“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”** I once heard an intriguing explanation for this verse, but I couldn't verify it, so take this with a big grain of salt. In Yahshua's day, one of the priestly duties, assigned by lot, was to tend the temple altar fires at night (see Leviticus 6:9). Since there was nothing else going on, it was not unheard of for the priest on duty to shirk his responsibilities by napping on the job. But occasionally, a senior priest would pull a “surprise inspection,” so to speak—he would come “as a thief,” unexpectedly. If the junior priest was awake, alert, and attending to his chores, well and good; but if he had fallen asleep, the supervisor would sometimes dump hot coals from the altar into

the lap of his robe, burning a big hole just where a guy would tend to want it least. The shame involved was doubled. It wasn't just the exposure of the body, it was also the exposure of the slothfulness of the errant priest. The lessons are obvious: whether on this side of the rapture or afterward, don't get caught napping when Yahshua comes. Be alert to the events He's warned us about; be engaged in the work He has given you to do. Wake up!

Yahweh also offered a word of back-handed advice to those called by the Antichrist to this last great battle: **"Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, before Yahweh's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of Yahweh's anger comes upon you! Seek Yahweh, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of Yahweh's anger."** (Zephaniah 2:1-3) Make your choice: life or death.

The two witnesses will still be doing their thing in Jerusalem as this unprecedented military build-up shifts into high gear. By this time, the whole world is in agreement about these two emissaries of God: they're nothing but trouble. They said it wouldn't rain, and sure enough, there hasn't been any rain for almost three and a half years. They said the lakes and rivers would turn to blood, and that happened too. Plague after plague has come to pass just as these two predicted. They're getting to be a royal pain in the aspirations of man. But every time somebody goes out to "neutralize" them, they end up extra crispy. Is no one able to stop them?

No one, of course, wants them killed worse than the Antichrist does. But demon possessed or not, he's been reticent to put his life on the line in an effort to do personally what he's been unable to do vicariously for the last forty-two months. Like Muhammad before him, he's been reluctant to risk his own neck for his own cause. But that's about to change. We pick up the narrative in Revelation:

"When they [the two witnesses] finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them...." Here we see the "beast," a.k.a. the Antichrist, equated with the demon that inhabits him. It's not Satan, strangely enough. The one who "ascends out of the bottomless pit," is a demon (probably the first) that Satan released into the world when he was kicked out of heaven and given the keys to the abyss. This "beast" promptly took up residence in the sorry carcass of the Antichrist—possibly at the very moment of his assassination, reanimating his corpse and empowering him to feats of unheard of power, of unprecedented evil. He's the same evil spirit who inhabited the body

of Nero (as we discussed back in chapter 14), and perhaps a few other of history's baddest bad boys as well.

After 1,260 days of ministry, the witnesses are finally overcome and murdered in the streets. It's not that Yahweh can't protect them anymore; it's just that their job is done. The Antichrist and the Dragon would have killed them years before if they could have, but Yahweh had not permitted it. But now that the witnesses' mission is accomplished, Yahweh finally allows the beast, the demon of Nero, operating in the body of the Antichrist, to slay them.

Allowing their death isn't disloyalty on Yahweh's part. It's a gift, a merciful exit strategy from the admittedly horrible task these two guys have been faithfully performing for the past three and a half years. Besides, in a very real sense, these two faithful martyrs have the same deal any believer has. God reserves the right to call us home anytime He pleases. If you think about it, that's an incredibly liberating thought—the *worst* the world can do to us is to free us from the prison of our mortal bodies, sending our souls to a far better place. It is also a sobering reminder that we should not procrastinate in doing God's will. We, unlike the two witnesses, never know how much time we've got left.

“And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” That's Jerusalem, in case you missed it. Yahweh loves the place, but He's also very disappointed in it sometimes. Sodom and Egypt speak of perversion and worldliness—the antithesis of holiness. **“Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their 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....”**

This describes a phenomenon that wasn't possible until the early 1990s, when the first satellite television networks went on line. All over the world, people will watch the “live” television coverage (so to speak) and celebrate the death of these two men who had called down plagues “of biblical proportions” upon them. I imagine there'll be interviews with the Antichrist, the hero of the hour who, empowered by Nero's demon, had *personally* killed them when no one else could. He'll say things like, “Yes, sometimes if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself.” He will once again be hailed all over the world as the hero of the hour.

The idea of leaving their two mangled bodies lying there in the street may seem odd to us today, but it won't be to those who have grown used to the carnage of the past seven years. These corpses will be left not because there's no one to bury them, but because, like Romans leaving their crucifixion victims hanging beside the roadway, their fate is meant to be a warning to those who might be tempted to follow in their footsteps or heed their admonitions. The

Antichrist intends to keep the television cameras trained on the two witnesses until the flesh has rotted off their bones.

But Yahweh has other ideas. **“Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, ‘Come up here.’ And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them....”** When Yahshua ascended to heaven after His resurrection, He was seen only by His friends (Acts 1:9-11). But these faithful servants will be seen by everyone left on earth who still has a television or Internet access. As impressed with the Antichrist’s signs and wonders as these people have been in recent years, I wonder how they’ll feel when they see signs and wonders from Yahweh? Will it occur to them that maybe they bet on the wrong horse? I don’t know, but I do know human nature: we have a tendency to defend our poor choices to the bitter end. It’s a pride thing. Even an undeniable demonstration of God’s power over death won’t bring the world to repentance. It didn’t the first time, and it won’t now. Besides, didn’t the Antichrist suffer a mortal wound and come back to life? As in the days of Moses, sleight of hand and satanic trickery will serve quite nicely to obfuscate the truth.

When the world sees the two witnesses come back to life, they’ll be afraid, but that doesn’t mean they’ll repent. The Jews, however, those who have begun to return to Jerusalem, will see this sign as a confirmation of Yahweh’s greatness. The timing here is tricky: we need to be cognizant of God’s revealed timeline. Remember, Israel was to be protected in the wilderness for precisely 1,260 days (i.e., “time and times and half a time,” three and a half prophetic years—Revelation 12:14). They fled from Jerusalem on or shortly after day 1,230, on the occasion of the Antichrist’s grand unveiling—the abomination of desolation. Also, the gentiles were prophesied to “tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months” as the two witnesses prophesied against them (Revelation 11:2-3). Therefore, sometime during the final month of the Tribulation, the Israelis will begin to return to the city—unhindered (and unhunted) by the Antichrist. It matters not that the Antichrist has visited Jerusalem and killed the two witnesses here—he’s no longer in control of the city. His time is up. He’s losing his grip, and he knows it. All he can hope for now is that the accursed Jews *will* return to Jerusalem—in sufficient numbers to allow him to wipe them out there in one shot. His vast army is being assembled up north at Har Megiddo for this very purpose.

As he reviews his troops and chats with his generals, the Antichrist gets the bad news: the two witnesses whom he left dead on the street in Jerusalem have refused to stay that way. His real-time worldwide broadcasts of the corpses of these troublemakers give a whole new meaning to the term “live TV.” Enoch and Elijah suddenly stand on their feet, wave bye-bye to the astonished onlookers, and

ascend into the heavens, just as Yahshua did two thousand years before. The Antichrist is livid. If you can't trust corpses to stay dead, who *can* you trust?

Then, just when he thought things couldn't get any worse, this happens: **"In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven."** John then finishes his discussion of the sixth trumpet with these words: **"The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly."** (Revelation 11:8-14) The first woe, as you'll recall, was the fifth trumpet judgment, the release of the locust-like demons from the bottomless pit, sent to torment the followers of the Antichrist—those who **"do not have the seal of God on their foreheads."**

The second woe—the sixth trumpet—is encompassed by the ministry of the two witnesses, a 1,260-day period of plagues upon the earth, plagues prophesied by the witnesses and delivered by the angels of the first six bowl judgments. The second woe is past because the two witnesses are now gone—slain, resurrected, and ascended. But as John says, the world won't have to wait long for the third woe to commence. Strangely, though, he doesn't exactly say what it is. The seventh trumpet announces the conclusion of the matter: **"The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!"** (Revelation 11:15) There's no "woe" in that. The seventh trumpet will become reality when Yahshua assumes the throne of the Millennial kingdom on the ultimate Feast of Tabernacles. The third "woe," then, is what will happen to the world between the resurrection of the two witnesses and the coronation of the King. It's only five days (I'll explain why in a bit), but a whole lot of loose ends are going to be tied up in the interim.

The first piece of business is this: within an hour of the time the two witnesses are made alive again and called to heaven in a cloud, an earthquake—the *big one*—strikes the earth, epicentered near Jerusalem. John reports that some in the city died and the rest glorified Yahweh. Of course, this begs the question: *who* gave glory to God? The Antichrist? Not hardly. He left town for good a few days prior to this—after killing the two witnesses. The survivors of the earthquake who will give glory to God are the very believing Jews who have so recently returned to the city from their sojourn in the wilderness. These reawakened Israelites, if you'll recall, are sealed by Yahweh: **"At that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book."** (Daniel 12:1) That means the seven thousand who die in the earthquake (SF4) are unbelievers—either unrepentant Jews or gentile stragglers. Yahweh is taking His town back.

As I said earlier, I believe this earthquake is no ordinary temblor, but a very significant and specific event that's mentioned several times in scripture. It's either a prominent feature of the sixth seal, the sixth trumpet, *and* the seventh bowl judgments—the same earthquake mentioned in all three places—or there are

an awful lot of major earthquakes occurring with in a few days of each other. For my money, this kind of thing is just too hard to chalk up to coincidence. It seems to be, rather, the raising of the curtain on the final act of this play.

As Yahshua made his “triumphal” entry into Jerusalem, the people lining the streets “cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’” (Mark 11:9-10) How sad it is then, that a few days later we see him lamenting over the city, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh!’” (Matthew 23:37-39) We all know what happened. Within days, he was rejected, betrayed, and crucified. Jerusalem’s leaders had emphatically concluded, “This is *not* ‘He who comes in the name of Yahweh.’” And for the next two thousand years, the nation of Israel clung desperately to this most fatal of errors, the rejection of their own Messiah.

Ironically, it was this very Son of Man who would tell them what to look for when things got impossibly bleak—the signs preceding His own return in glory: “There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken....” By the final days of the Great Tribulation, all of these things will have been literally and precisely fulfilled. Note Yahshua’s emphasis on “perplexity,” something that hasn’t been mentioned much in these prophecies. His signs would be so unusual, so unprecedented, men wouldn’t know what to make of them. Evolutionists and secular-humanist historians have been telling them for years that mankind’s history is a story of steady upward progress, of continuity and steady advancement over millions of years. Nothing like this has ever happened before, so obviously, *it can’t happen*. But consider this: what would it take for men who have lived through nuclear holocaust to be so frightened their hearts give out? These are going to be *some signs*.

What’s next? “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:25-28) Until Israel sees the signs in the heavens and the distress of the earth, it will be unable to fully appreciate that

the coming of the “Son of Man” (the title Yahshua used of Himself) represents their ultimate redemption.

Few of these Jews will be all that familiar with the words of Yahshua. But Yahweh had also told them what to expect through His prophet Zechariah—hundreds of years before Yahshua’s time. We begin with a promise that the nations the Antichrist gathers for the final showdown will be met by Yahweh Himself—personally. **“Yahweh will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east....”** The *feet* of Yahweh? Yahweh is Spirit; if He has “feet” they must belong to a manifestation of the godhead who is not only divine, but human as well—the Messiah. Once again we see Yahweh and Yahshua as one being, one entity, one *person*.

Christ’s return to the Mount of Olives will be what NASA would call a “hard landing.” **“And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.”** (Zechariah 14:3-4) Though Zechariah couldn’t have known it, there is a seismic fault running right through the Mount of Olives in roughly an east-west direction from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. The granddaddy fault in the area, however, is the great north-south rift running all the way from the Toros Mountains in Turkey down the Jordan Valley to the Dead Sea, through the Gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea, and continuing south through much of eastern Africa. Its northern sector (down to the southern end of the Red Sea) forms the boundary between the African and Arabian tectonic plates—it’s a seismic time-bomb. A careful reading of the verse reveals that although the Mount of Olives will be split, presumably along its fault line, the earthquake proper will occur eighteen miles east in the Jordan Valley, where the tectonic plates slip past each other, moving in a north-south direction. (If the quake were epicentered on the smaller Mount of Olives fault, the land movement would be east to west.) The bottom line is that this is no ordinary temblor: it’s the Big One.

Earthquakes are a normal part of life on earth. As a matter of fact, without our planet’s crust floating around on the mantle like ice sheets on a frozen river—cracks and all—our atmosphere would be very different from what it is. This would be a cold, inhospitable world. But Yahweh has designed this place to sustain life—our life—and earthquakes and volcanoes are part of what makes the system work. *This* quake, however, is in a category all by itself. Amos explains: **“Yahweh has sworn by the pride of Jacob [that’s Messiah, if I’m not mistaken]: ‘Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall the land [’erets: ground, land, country, world, or earth] not tremble for this, and everyone mourn who dwells in it? All of it shall swell like the River, heave and subside like the River of Egypt.’”** (Amos 8:7-8) In context, the “works” of which the prophet speaks seem like no big deal (in our limited minds).

He's not talking about crucifying the Messiah, murdering the prophets, or anything like that. He's merely describing the everyday life of people who choose to live without Yahweh—the little scams and underhanded dealings that, while not in blatant violation of the mores of society, nevertheless betray our utter contempt for a holy God. So “the land will tremble for this.”

John also saw this happening—*three times*. The seventh seal, the seventh trumpet judgment and the seventh bowl-o-wrath describe this dramatic punctuation of the Tribulation's woes. The trumpet heralds the Hallelujah Chorus: **“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’”** Here we see Yahweh and Yahshua distinguished according to their functions; but they're not two entities: when the heavenly host proclaims that *“He shall reign forever,”* they're referring to “both” Yahweh and “His Christ”—they are One. **“And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying: ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth....’** The elders represent the saved of all ages, as we have seen. Here they respectfully say, “It's about time, Father Yahweh!” The timing, of course, being His, is perfect. Rewards and punishments alike are about to be dispensed. Environmentalists should be gratified to learn that Yahweh has promised to “destroy those who destroy the earth.”

“Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.” (Revelation 11:15-19) The earthly temple was patterned upon a heavenly prototype (which explains why Yahweh was so explicit in His instructions to Moses). Here that heavenly original is opened, revealing the *real* ark of the covenant, the ultimate symbol of God's plan for our salvation, as if to say, “Everyone alive has now chosen between salvation and damnation. It is time to finish this.” The earth answers with a series of dramatic affirmations, including the last and greatest earthquake.

As we have come to expect, the seventh bowl judgment reveals even more detail about this terrifying final chain of events. **“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth....”** Here the great earthquake is quantified: it's the biggest temblor in

the history of man. As we shall see, it has multiple epicenters—the effects are felt worldwide, more or less simultaneously.

Naturally, Yahweh first informs us of how Jerusalem fares. We saw a bit earlier that the earthquake takes place immediately after the two witnesses are brought back to life and taken up to heaven in a cloud—from Jerusalem. There we learned that a tenth of the city was flattened and seven thousand men were killed. Zechariah added that the Mount of Olives would be split in two, with a big valley appearing down the middle. Here we learn a bit more: **“Now the great city was divided into three parts....”** The very topography of Jerusalem is undergoing a dramatic change in preparation for Christ’s massive urban renewal project, which we’ll study a few chapters hence.

But let’s stay focused on the moment: **“...and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath....”** Like I said, multiple epicenters. Whatever remnants of civilization that were left standing by the nuclear holocaust of World War III, the volcano-driven tsunamis and asteroid hits of the Trumpet judgments, and the scorched-earth tactics of the Eastern horde of World War IV are now shaken to their foundations by the most devastating earthquake ever to visit the planet. Even in normal times, the edges of every tectonic plate are hot zones, generating thousands of temblors large and small on an ongoing basis. But now the earth’s crust begins to twist and shift in earnest, needing desperately to move aside to make room for God’s glory as He touches down upon the Mount of Olives, but having nowhere to go. The earth itself is seen bowing humbly before its Creator.

And Babylon? The earthquake will take out every remaining symbol of man-made religion: every statue of Buddha, every mosque, every Shinto shrine and Hindu temple, every Chinese dragon image whether of paper or of stone, every church building where the saving grace of Yahweh was strategically ignored, every university where the poisonous myth of atheistic humanism was preached with religious fervor to eager young minds—and every vestige of Antichrist and Satan worship, including his big statue.

If you think I’m exaggerating when I speak of entire tectonic plates shifting and grinding, then *you* figure out what to make of this: **“Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found....”** We’ve got absolutely no frame of reference for what’s being described here. We’re talking about a series of events of Richter-scale magnitude ten-plus (the theoretical maximum), depending on where you are—all over the world. If not a major reshuffling of the topography of the earth’s crust, then what is it? Surviving such a thing will be a matter of God’s grace, geography, and dumb luck. Amazingly, some—many—*will* live through it. I get the distinct impression that the damage is actually *lightest* in Israel, getting worse as the “crust tsunami” spreads outward from Olivet.

The seventh bowl game isn't quite over. **"And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great."** (Revelation 16:17-21) Seventy-five pound hailstones on top of the first "earthquake" worthy of the name, and all men can do is blaspheme God. There's no winning with these people—I mean, with the two witnesses dead, at least they're finally getting some precipitation! I can almost see Yahweh shaking His head: *They seem to like signs and wonders—they should have loved this. My kindness didn't bring them to repentance—this should have at least gotten their attention. But their minds are made up. They've made their choice.* There will be no repentance. The battle lines are drawn.

Not surprisingly, Revelation isn't the only place where this great quake is described. **"Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let Yahweh be a witness against you, Yahweh from His holy temple. For behold, Yahweh is coming out of His place; He will come down and tread on the high places of the earth [specifically, the Mount of Olives]. The mountains will melt under Him, and the valleys will split like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place."** The prophet is seeing what geologists call seismic liquefaction. **"All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what are the high places of Judah? Are they not Jerusalem?"** (Micah 1:2-5) "High places" means more than hills and mountains. It is a code-word for false worship, for the worshippers of Ba'al customarily performed their rituals on hilltops. The prophet is pointing out that the sin of Israel is the root cause of the world's apostasy. Their national rejection of Yahweh and His Messiah has led directly, inexorably, to the world's present predicament. Yet He still loves them—not because of what they've done, but because of who He is.

It's Amos's turn. **"Yahweh almighty, [it is] He who touches the earth and it melts, and all who dwell there mourn. All of it shall swell like the River, and subside like the River of Egypt. He who builds His layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, and pours them out on the face of the earth—Yahweh is His name."** (Amos 9:5-6) Gee, and all this time I thought Amos was a simple shepherd. Turns out he had detailed knowledge of seismology, geology, and meteorology, thousands of years ahead of his time. Or could it be he was a prophet of the Living God? Note that he, too, predicts a worldwide earthquake: *"All of it shall swell and subside."*

So does Haggai. **"For thus says Yahweh almighty: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations.'"** (Haggai 2:6-7) "All nations," as far as I can tell, means *all nations*. The word "shake" (both instances) is the Hebrew *raash*—to quake, shake, tremble, or sway: the non-linear

back-and-forth motion of an object. It is also used of horses and locusts leaping or jumping.

Nahum continues the thought: **“The mountains quake [*raash*] before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves [Hebrew *nasa*: literally, “is carried away”] at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it. [There it is again: *all*.] Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him.”** Is there no hope, no place to hide? Actually, there is. **“Yahweh is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.”** (Nahum 1:5-8)

A Psalm by the sons of Korah emphasizes this place of shelter even in the darkest times. **“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed [Hebrew *muwr*: changed], and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah.”** (Psalm 46:1-3) When the Big One hits, this psalm should be on the lips of every believer as he or she contemplates the events of this momentous day. The psalmist speaks of “shaking” and “swelling,” which is precisely what volcanoes do before they erupt.

A provocative question remains: will the Antichrist’s temple be destroyed in this whopper quake? It’s quite possible, even likely. The fault line through the Mount of Olives runs just south of the Temple Mount, through the Valley of Hinnom. So whether the temple—or even the mount—still stands depends on how much of Malachi’s prophecy has already been fulfilled: **“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And Yahweh, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,”** says Yahweh Almighty. **‘But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderer’s soap.’** (Malachi 3:1-2) “My messenger” was John the Baptist (but the role will also be fulfilled by the future Elijah). Yahshua (who, as we have seen, *is* Yahweh) is described here as “the Messenger of the covenant.” He already came to “His temple” two thousand years ago, but according to Ezekiel, He will build a new temple and enter it via the eastern gate (43:4). There is no scriptural reason the temple has to be standing the moment the King returns. The persistent Jewish myth that the building of the temple will precipitate the Messiah’s coming is groundless and silly.

Is “this temple” mentioned by Malachi Herod’s temple, the Tribulation edifice, or the new one Yahshua will build in Jerusalem? Or could it be His physical body? The Haggai passage quoted above goes on to say, **“And they shall come to the Desire of All Nations [that’s Messiah] and I will fill this temple with glory,”** says almighty Yahweh.” (Haggai 2:7) Yahweh has most definitely “filled the temple”

of Yahshua's body with glory. That being said, though, it's clear that a new temple will be built, one the Antichrist's grubby hands have never touched. If I had to guess (and I do, since we aren't told), I'd say the Antichrist's Tribulation Temple will crumble into expensive dust during this earthquake, along with anything else that might still be standing on the Temple Mount. As John said, "Great Babylon will be remembered." It seems to me that God has no use for our pretensions; He's only interested in our love. We shall in a later chapter take a close look at the Millennial temple as specified in Ezekiel's prophecy. It looks nothing like any temple that has ever been built on Mount Moriah.

For what it's worth, there's one more factor worth mentioning. The Mount of Olives today is intact—it does not have a big valley running east to west through the middle of it, nor has there ever been a multiple-epicenter quake in recorded history in which entire cities all over the earth crumbled and islands and mountains disappeared. This is another nail in the coffin of the preterist argument that says all of these prophecies have been fulfilled in the past. It just isn't so.

Let's return to Zechariah. We weren't quite done there. **"Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus Yahweh my God will come, and all the saints with You."** (Zechariah 14:5) The context, you'll recall, is Yahweh's fight against the nations. The earthquake has formed a trough—a "mountain valley"—where the summit of the Mount of Olives used to be. And the Jews are seen using this valley as an escape route. The question is, what are they fleeing from, the earthquake, or the Antichrist?

There are admittedly a lot of things going on at once here. We're focused now on a single autumn day (October 3, 2033, if my "one-day-is-literally-a-thousand-years view is correct). Those Jews who have so recently returned to Jerusalem after three and a half years of God's protection in the wilderness suddenly find themselves facing an old nemesis with a new army: the Antichrist has assembled his forces and is preparing to move in for the kill. The two witnesses, whom the returning Jews counted as allies (albeit in the same way a cancer patient sees chemotherapy) were killed three and a half days ago. But today, before their very eyes, their corpses have been revived; and more amazing still, they've ascended to heaven in a cloud, having been commanded by an audible, thunderous voice to "come up." Then, not more than an hour later, this earthquake-to-end-all-earthquakes has taken place, caused not by normal tectonic forces, but apparently by the very feet of God stepping onto the Mount of Olives.

It will be lost on none of these pious Jews what day this is. It is the tenth day of the month of Tishri—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The nation of Israel will at last understand: everything Yahshua of Nazareth said was true; everything He did was done out of love for them. And they will be afflicted in their souls.

“They will look on [Yahweh] whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zechariah 12:10)

Those who have discovered the Book of Acts will realize that the prophecy concerning the manner of His return had been fulfilled to the letter: **“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”** (Acts 1:10) The very next verse explains where they were when this happened, where Yahshua would come again: the Mount of Olives.

By this time, the Jews will have come to the realization that one more time, they must dodge the Antichrist. But the despair will have dissipated: they’ll know that this time, all they have to do is get behind their Messiah—literally. They won’t have far to go. As Zack said, **“Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.”** Just to the east of Olivet is a little village called Bayth Haw-Aytsel. It was mentioned in Micah 1:11 as “Beth Azel.” If this is the “Azal” of which Zechariah spoke, Israelis in the Old City won’t have to flee more than a mile or two to reach the shelter of Christ’s protection. In truth, though Zechariah reports their flight (and you can’t blame them for being nervous), they didn’t really have to move at all.

Isaiah puts the moment in perspective: **“The glory of Yahweh shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken....”** “All flesh shall see it” means the news cameras are still rolling. Read it and weep, world. **“O Zion, you who bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you who bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid. Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ Behold, Yahweh shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.”** (Isaiah 40:5, 9-11) Jews in Jerusalem will see it first, and spread the news to those who have not yet returned: Messiah has come! He will come as a tender shepherd to meet the needs of His own flock, but also with a strong arm to fight against those who would harm them. Notice His short term goal: **“His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”** We’ll discuss the rewards a bit later; they’re high on His priority list. But first, there is some last-minute business to attend to: His work is cut out for Him.

Every farmer knows that timing is important when it comes to harvesting crops. You don’t bring in your corn before the ears have formed and been given a chance to ripen into something good. Neither do you leave your crop standing in

the field until it rots. Rather, the wise farmer gathers his crop as it nears the peak of its perfection—when it’s about as good as its going to get.

In the same way, God will harvest the earth. He’s going to give his “corn” every opportunity to develop into fine, full ears. Some will mature early, and some late. Some, he notes with chagrin (see Matthew 13:30), will turn out in the end to be weeds—good for nothing. Yahweh knows that He can’t let the weeds grow in His field forever, for they will eventually choke out whatever good grain still remains, making the whole field unproductive. Everything will get sorted out at the time of the harvest.

That’s the picture, more or less, that John was shown—an overview of the end of earth’s “growing season.” **“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle....”** This is Yahshua, returning in glory. His crown (Greek *stephanos*, a victor’s wreath) is made of gold, not a perishable laurel bough like the Olympic champions would have received—He has not only won, His victory is permanent and incorruptible. **“And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped....”** The angel isn’t telling God what to do; he’s merely announcing the plan so that John might understand what’s going on. Note that it’s King Yahshua who’s wielding the sickle—the authority is His.

His angels, however, are tasked for the harvest as well. **“Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God....”** Though we see the angel swinging a sickle of preparation here, it is clear that the administration of wrath remains God’s prerogative alone.

“And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.” (Revelation 14:14-20) I admit it: I’m having trouble comprehending the extent of the carnage here. My feeble brain can’t seem to count that high. This is worse than any single engagement we’ve seen so far, and we’ve seen a lot. The battle of Magog looks like a skirmish in comparison.

Note first that the “battle” is fought *outside* of the city, i.e., Jerusalem. That’s where the Jews are holed up, surrounded by the Antichrist’s army-to-end-all-armies like Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Jerusalem is also where Yahshua has made his earth-shaking entrance, so naturally, Satan thinks he’s got *Him* surrounded, too. The Antichrist’s vast army has by this time (a day or two

from the end) deployed over the whole country: 1,600 “furlongs” (Roman *stadia*) is about 180 miles—pretty much the entire length of Israel. John calmly infers that their mangled corpses will pave the nation from one end to the other—squashed like grapes in a winepress, their blood splashing up to three or four feet off the ground—the height of a horse’s bridle. I realize this is awfully squishy stuff. If you don’t like the sight of blood, especially your own, I suggest you don’t go there.

A little later, John saw this whole scene again from a different angle. **“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse.”** This is the same “conquering hero” metaphor we saw when we first met the Antichrist, but the first seal judgment revealed a mere illusion. Yahshua is the real thing. **“And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God [cf. John 1:1]. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses....”** Remember, this scene is in heaven. This army is comprised of the saints, raptured or otherwise relieved of their mortal bodies, clothed with imputed righteousness (in reality, the only kind there is). We’ve got white horses, too, which identifies *us* as conquering heroes. But as we shall see, we’ve already done our “conquering,” we’ve run our race. We won’t be asked to fight any more battles on earth. The King has that covered.

“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.” His “weapon,” quite literally, is the Word of God. All of scripture has been leading up to this conclusion. If the nations haven’t listened *to* it, they will be struck *by* it. **“And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS....”** This is no longer the baby in the manger, no longer the meek and lowly itinerant rabbi teaching His ragtag band of disciples the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the one led as a lamb to the slaughter. He is no longer in stealth mode; He is now shown to be Who He is—Who He always was: King of Kings.

“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.” (Revelation 19:11-19) There is no doubt as to the outcome of this “battle.” The Winner has already invited the birds of the air to His victory celebration. The losers are the main course. If you’ll recall, the Hebrew word for the “birds” that

were invited to feast on the dead of the Battle of Magog, *tsippowr*, could be construed to include in its definition the insects, and even bacteria, that help to break down the flesh of the dead. But here the Greek word for birds apparently means just that: *orneon* comes from the root from which we get “ornithology,” the study of birds. Maybe I’m making too much out of this, but it seems Yahweh is going to want these corpses cleaned up in a hurry this time.

The King is not hunkering down in Jerusalem waiting for the battle to come to him. Isaiah describes the action like a war correspondent. **“Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?—‘I who speak in righteousness [as John reported, “In righteousness He judges and makes war...”], mighty to save....”** It’s Yahshua, whose name means “Yahweh saves.” He’s starting in the badlands of Edom/Jordan (remember, they’ve been wiped out: —Obadiah 18 reports, “No survivor shall remain of the house of Esau”) and He’s working His way north and west. **“Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? ‘I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples [i.e., those still living on the earth] no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury. Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes....”** Is that graphic enough for you? Yahshua is doing this all by Himself. He doesn’t need any help from you, me, or the valiant Jewish warriors who were magnanimously allowed to participate in His victory over Magog.

Why? **“For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold. Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me.”** The phrase “brought salvation” is the Hebrew word *yasha*, a component of the Messiah’s name, Yahshua (“Yahweh is salvation,” or “Yahweh saves”). God is seen *personally* saving, delivering, and rescuing us—*for His own sake*. **“And My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.”** (Isaiah 63:1-6) If you’re someone who still clings to the odd notion that a holy and loving God will never retaliate against those who hate Him, you need to deal with this passage. Yahshua came down off that cross a long time ago. He’s not your victim. He’s your God.

It doesn’t matter how many men the Antichrist throws into the fray, or what kind of weapons he uses. It’s no match—the contest isn’t even close. **“Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales. Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.”** (Isaiah 40:15-17) The combined military might of the entire world doesn’t have the mass of navel lint compared to

Yahweh's strength. And this fact makes his restraint over the last six thousand years truly amazing.

Through the prophet Joel, Yahweh dares the nations to come and fight Him. **“Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’”** Invent all the high-tech weapons you want—train till you think you're ready. Psyche yourselves up, and put together your dream coalition. **“Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around....”**

In case you think the three frog-like demons are flouting the will of God when they persuade the nations to come to this foolhardy war, think again: **“Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O Yahweh. Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations....”** Joel isn't restricting the conflict to Israel's neighbors here. The idea is that of being surrounded by enemies, hemmed in, beleaguered from every side. And what's this about Jehoshaphat? There is nothing to connect King Jehoshaphat with Armageddon or the Plain of Esdraelon. In fact, the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” may not be a real location at all, but a symbolic name (like the “valley of decision” Joel mentions a few verses later): Jehoshaphat means “Yahweh has judged.” On the other hand, when Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir (Edom)—collectively, today's Jordan—attacked Judah during King Jehoshaphat's reign, Yahweh gave Judah a great victory, centered in a valley they called Berachah (i.e. “blessing”). This valley, south of Bethlehem, is not that far from Jerusalem, Antichrist's prime objective. So who knows?

Joel continues: **“Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great.”** Does any of this sound familiar? **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of Yahweh is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. Yahweh also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem.”** (Joel 3:9-16) Both the seventh trumpet and seventh bowl judgments mentioned “noises.” This would qualify nicely as an explanation of what that means. Scary, if you're not accustomed to hearing His voice.

King David *was* in the habit of listening to the voice of Yahweh, but that's not to say he wasn't continually awed by it. **“The voice of Yahweh is over the waters; the God of glory thunders; Yahweh is over many waters. The voice of Yahweh is powerful; the voice of Yahweh is full of majesty. The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars, yes, Yahweh splinters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox. The voice of Yahweh divides the flames of fire. The voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness; Yahweh shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of Yahweh**

makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everyone says, 'Glory!'" (Psalm 29:3-9)

If I didn't know better, I'd say David had been spending time in the lab doing acoustic weapons research. Yahweh designed the human ear to hear frequencies between about 20 Hz (or "hertz"—1 Hz equals 1 cycle per second) and 20,000 Hz. However, there are also sonic ranges above and below audible sound—called ultrasound and infrasound, respectively—that can affect things in the environment, including us, in surprising ways. Tigers, for example, are apparently able to utter an ultra-low roar (18 Hz) capable of physically stunning their prey—even before they attack. Sperm whales stun large squid using the same method. Human flesh resonates at between 7 and 8 Hz, causing nausea or worse, depending on the decibel level; and our eyeballs vibrate—causing distorted vision—at about 19 Hz. The Nazis experimented with a sonic cannon in the 1940s that could supposedly shatter wooden planks at 200 yards. (They were trying to develop an anti-aircraft weapon but couldn't make it work.)

I could ramble on, but you get the picture: sound waves have the potential to do things we can only imagine, and although we're only just beginning to understand their potential, Yahweh (having invented sound) knows precisely what to do with them. The hordes gathered for the Battle of Armageddon are described as being **"killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of [Yahshua]."** (Revelation 19:20) In light of the information David shared above, I wouldn't be a bit surprised to find that the "winepress of the wrath of God" is literally the "voice of Yahweh," an incredibly powerful and focused infrasonic event that physically obliterates the allies of Lucifer like a winepress squishes grapes, splashing their blood as high as a horse's bridle for a distance of 180 miles (see Revelation 14:20). It's possible that the squishy plague described in Zechariah 14:12 refers to this: **"Their flesh shall dissolve while they stand on their feet, their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths."** *Basso profundo.*

We weren't quite through hearing from Joel. **"The heavens and earth will shake [yeah, we heard that somewhere] but Yahweh will be a shelter for His people and the strength of the children of Israel."** This seems to be confirmation that the 7,000 who die in Jerusalem in the Big One aren't believing Jews, and that the survivors are. **"So you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens [i.e., those Yahweh considers strangers to Him—people who don't know Him] shall ever pass through her again."** (Joel 3:16-17) In case you haven't noticed, Yahweh has a special place in His heart for Jerusalem. It is His uniquely chosen place upon the earth (which explains why Satan covets it). God directed Abraham to these hills to sacrifice his son Isaac before anything was even there, and His interest in Zion will continue as long as the earth stands. It bears repeating: Yahweh is a Zionist.

It never ceases to amaze me that though we've got almost forty writers of prophecy spread out over 1,500 years, they never contradict each other. Forty writers, one Author. A thousand plots, one story.

God is not making this up as He goes along. It has all been determined from the beginning. Hannah, the mother of Israel's first "titled" prophet, Samuel, declared, **"He will guard the feet of His saints, but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail. The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken in pieces; From heaven He will thunder against them. Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed."** (I Samuel 2:9-10) She said this before Israel even had a king, you understand—she was speaking of the coming Messiah. I guess Samuel's prophetic gifts ran in the family.

The prophetic plan of God is scattered throughout the Bible. We looked at the beginning of this Psalm earlier in this chapter. The sons of Korah continue their song of praise: **"There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High."** This is a real river, one that doesn't exist yet. We'll revisit it a few chapters hence. **"God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted. Yahweh almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah..."** Now we know what time of day Yahshua intends to move against the Antichrist's forces. Again we see God's *voice* as His weapon of choice.

Yahweh is the Creator, but as any contractor can tell you, construction often involves demolition as well. **"Come, behold the works of Yahweh, Who has made desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire."** World War I was called "the war to end all wars." We all know how erroneous that moniker turned out to be. Yahweh is the only one who can end war, for He is the only one who can change men's hearts. It is pointless for well-meaning people to try to alter the behavior of others—to make them more peaceable. Peace on earth comes through the Prince of Peace alone: **"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! Yahweh almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"** (Psalm 46:4-11) At the risk of sticking the spurs to a horse that's already running at full speed, notice that the "nations" will exalt "the God of Jacob." Judaism and Christianity have no business being separate "religions." There is one God. His name is Yahweh. The God of the Jews is the only One there is

(which is not to say they know Him yet), and “God with us”—Immanuel—is the title borne by Yahshua.

While we’re in the Psalms, let’s look at a couple from David, whom Yahweh often used to speak in the voice of the Messiah, David’s descendent and Savior. **“I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, so that they could not rise; they have fallen under my feet.”** Yes, squashed like grapes, according to John. **“For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me [virtually the whole world]. You have also given me the necks of my enemies, so that I destroyed those who hated me. They cried out, but there was none to save; even to Yahweh, but He did not answer them.”** Here’s a sobering thought: once you’ve made your final choice to serve Satan, once you’ve received his evil spirit, repentance—even crying out to Yahweh Himself—will not help you. You’re beyond salvation at that point. **“Then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind; I cast them out like dirt in the streets. You have delivered me 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....”** After Armageddon, there will be no question as to Who is in charge. As the news spreads, the terrified survivors of the Tribulation will emerge from their hiding places and pinch themselves to make sure they’re not dreaming—to convince themselves that the nightmare is really over. There are no more thoughts of rebellion. Whether happy about the outcome or not, those alive after Armageddon will know who the King is, and will bow to His rule.

David continues. **“Yahweh lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted.”** Then, speaking again of the Messiah, **“It is God who avenges me, and subdues the peoples under me; He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Yahweh, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name. Great deliverance He gives to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore.”** (Psalm 18:37-50) Here we see the concept of vengeance again, executed by Yahweh against those who have rejected His anointed, Yahshua, the “son” of David.

In a similar vein, David speaks for his nation: **“We will rejoice in your salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners!”** The *name* of our God? David just told us that name. Did you catch it? No, of course not. This is one of the seventy-seven times in the Old Covenant scriptures that the actual name of the Messiah is revealed—and then mis-translated. “Salvation” is the Hebrew *Yashuwah*, phonetically indistinguishable from Yahshua. If you knew him only as “Jesus,” you’d miss the entire point: Yahweh *is* salvation. **“May Yahweh fulfill all your petitions. Now I know that Yahweh saves His anointed; He will answer him from His**

holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of Yahweh our God." Seeing Yahshua's great and final victory achieved without any manmade weaponry at all, the Tribulation Jews will finally understand the power of their God over their enemies. **"They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright. Save, O Yahweh! May the King answer us when we call."** (Psalm 20:5-9)

Patriarchs and prophets alike have foreseen Yahweh's plan unfolding. Admittedly, Jacob's view as he blessed his children on his deathbed was so fuzzy he couldn't have known what he was saying. But Yahweh did. Speaking of Judah—but in reality prophesying of the Messiah who would be his direct descendent—Jacob/Israel said, **"To Him shall be the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine [clearly a reference to Yahshua's first-century advent—cf. Zechariah 9:9, Matthew 21:5], He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes [cf. Isaiah 63:2-3]. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk."** (Genesis 49:11-12)

As the Old Covenant morphed into the New, the story didn't change. The aging Simeon encountered Mary, Joseph, and their newborn Child in the temple, and he knew he'd found Someone special. **"He [Simeon] took Him [the infant Yahshua] up in his arms and blessed God and said: 'Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.'" (Luke 2:28-32)** Israel, in case you haven't noticed, hasn't had much "glory" in the two thousand years since Yahshua walked its streets. But all that is about to change.

We haven't heard from Daniel lately. Does he have anything to say about these portentous times? (Would I be asking the question if he didn't?)

You've got to admit, sometimes it's hard to tell if you're reading from Revelation or from Daniel; the tone (not to mention the content) is so similar. Daniel reports, **"I watched till thrones [plural—they're for the judges, probably John's twenty-four elders] were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him...."** The Prophet is witnessing the Messiah in His glory—the same Yahshua who would walk the earth as a simple Jewish carpenter hundreds of years later, after temporarily laying down the trappings of divinity. The love of a God Who would do that to rescue you and me is truly stunning.

“A thousand thousands [angels, I presume] ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.” The normal “couplet” structure of Hebrew poetry suggests that this may refer to the same group of ministering angels, but I can’t help but wonder if this second designation speaks instead of the myriads of souls—a hundred million of them—who were slain for their faith by the Antichrist (cf. Revelation 6:9-11—the fifth seal). After all, look at what happens next: **“The court was seated, and the books were opened. I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn [i.e., the Antichrist, if you’ll recall the imagery Daniel used] was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.”** (Daniel 7:9-11) It’s as if the angels are the bailiffs in Yahshua’s court, and there are “ten thousand times ten thousand” witnesses present to plead with God for justice to be done. Not a lawyer in sight.

This “beast,” in context, is not the same as John’s “beast from the sea” (i.e., the Antichrist), but rather the fourth gentile kingdom, one called “dreadful and terrible,” described earlier in this vision. If you’ll recall, it is a resurrection of the Roman empire, either in geography or in spirit or both. But yes, the Antichrist leads it. Daniel restates the fact of neo-Rome’s demise a few verses later: **“But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his [Antichrist’s] dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.”** (Daniel 7:26)

Years after Daniel saw this vision, he received another that covered much of the same territory. Here we see a quick synopsis of the Antichrist’s career: **“Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes [introduced by John as the “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”—Yahshua]. “But he shall be broken without human means.”** (Daniel 8:25) No human army—not even the Israelis—are able to stop him. The Messiah alone is up to the task.

Although Nahum’s prophecy was written in a primary sense to foretell the imminent demise of the wicked city of Nineveh, it spills over to the last days: he’s also talking about the Antichrist. **“Yahweh has given a command concerning you: your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, for you are vile. Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace.”** (Nahum 1:14-15) What “mountains?” Who “proclaims peace?” Knowingly or not, the prophet is referring to the Messiah, Yahshua, the One who, as we saw above, “makes wars cease to the end of the earth.” When His feet touch the Mount of Olives, the Antichrist and his whole phony scam are as good as dead.

And Israel? Will they ever feel safe again? Yes, Yahweh assures them. **“There shall no longer be a pricking brier or a painful thorn for the house of Israel from among all who are around them, who despise them. Then they shall know that I am the Lord Yahweh.**

Thus says the Lord Yahweh: 'When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I am Yahweh their God.'" (Ezekiel 28:24-26)

Nahum wasn't quite done. **"O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; He is utterly cut off."** (Nahum 1:15) Yahweh's not about to take them back to the purely metaphorical Original Covenant Mosaic-Torah economy, you understand, not when the Messiah is present among them. As Jeremiah described it, God's Covenant—renewed and restored—would now be inscribed on their hearts. But because the whole Law was fulfilled in the life of Yahshua, the seven annual "appointed feasts" of Yahweh will be just as relevant and meaningful after His final coming as they were the day they were instituted—now in a memorial rather than prophetic role. Yahweh wants Israel to continue to celebrate them, sacrifices and all, after He returns. We'll discuss them at length in a future chapter. At first glance, these ritual sacrifices might seem like nothing more than the tender and touching provision of a warm and familiar (even if previously misunderstood) "security blanket," a comforting gesture toward a beloved child who's just awakened from a terrible nightmare. Indeed, God is going to let Israel hang on to her "blankie" for another thousand years. But they're much more than that. The feasts of Yahweh rehearse the heart of God's plan for the redemption of all mankind. They were designed to go on as long as Israel walked the earth, and they'll be especially meaningful now that they're finally understood, and now that "the wicked one" is no longer around to trouble them. However, I'm getting just slightly ahead of my story.

Leave it to John to succinctly wrap up the "battle" of Armageddon. He's so succinct, in fact, it all seems just a touch anticlimactic. This battle is apparently over before it begins—nobody even gets a shot off. **"Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone...."** No Nuremburg-style trials, no lawyers, no hand-wringing over the morality of the death penalty. These two are *so* guilty, as a matter of fact, Yahshua, the supreme Judge, skips the execution and sends 'em straight to hell, in deference to King David's prayer (**"Let death seize them; Let them go down alive into hell, for wickedness is in their dwellings and among them."**—Psalm 55:15). As much as I'd like to go off on a tangent and talk about the "lake of fire burning with brimstone," I'll have to defer our exploration of hell—and heaven—for a later time.

Having already invited all His feathered friends to dinner, Yahweh isn't about to send them home hungry. So—**“And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”** (Revelation 19:20-21) Like I said: anticlimactic. No Battle of the Bulge, No Tet Offensive, no *war*. Just justice, judgment, and instantaneous death.

You may be asking yourself, *If it's this easy for Yahshua to defeat the forces of evil at the Battle of Armageddon, why doesn't he do it all the time? Why do we have to go through the agony of fighting our enemies—and sometimes our friends—to see justice done and righteousness prevail?* At the risk of repeating myself (again), the reason is choice, free will. Every one of us has been given the ability—and the responsibility—to choose between right and wrong, between good and bad, between loving our Creator, hating Him, and ignoring Him. I know it seldom seems like such a clear-cut decision, but in the final analysis, it's black and white: absolute truth or something else.

There's only one road to God. It's straight, and it's narrow—and Christians who've been on it for a while know that it can be littered with potholes. (They can usually be avoided, but you have to stay alert and observe Yahweh's posted speed limits.) When we describe this road to people not traveling on it, we sometimes frighten or confuse them, for it's easy to lose sight of the destination if you're worried about the journey. Everyone wants to get to God, of course (even if it's a god of their own imagination), but these folks either haven't asked for directions or they've accepted bad advice. They have all mistakenly assumed that the road they're on leads to the same place or someplace just as good.

While the road to God is narrow, it's also very, very long, and it has lots of onramps—right up to the very end. Yahweh designed it that way, because He wants everyone to have every opportunity to get onto the right road—to get to Him. The road to God is clearly marked, but each driver has to *choose* to go there—to leave the fast, smooth highway he's on. And that can be hard, because we were all *born* on that highway. We're used to it. Truth is, we *like* it.

Complicating matters is that both roads are toll-roads. The difference is that on the world's highway, you pay the toll when you get off, and the cost is kind of steep: death. God's road is no less expensive—in fact, it's much more so—but the toll must be paid before you get on. The toll on God's road is holiness, righteousness, sinlessness—*perfection*. However, since nobody's perfect, He Himself provides the required toll to everyone who wants to come to Him, because that's what *He* wants. And what does perfection cost? The blood of His Messiah, the most precious substance known to man. The price is paid: all we have to do is accept it.

And what do “good works” have to do with it? Nothing at all. You can't pay the toll with your good works, for the simple reason that good works (as far as

God is concerned) don't exist until we accept Yahweh's gift, pass through the turnstile, and begin our travels on His road. Only then do our works count for something, but by that time, our eternal destination is already determined.

That's the choice then: get on the narrow road that leads to God, or stay on the broad highway that leads somewhere else. It's black and white, yes or no. There is no middle ground. The reason, therefore, that Armageddon is such an easy "battle" for Yahshua to win is that by the time it's fought, the clock has run out; the last onramp has been passed—all of the people on the earth have made up their minds. Yahshua is in no danger of abridging anybody's free will by dealing decisively with his enemies at this point. They came prepared to fight Him. They have chosen—poorly.

And the Jews? Yahweh has never given up on this family. **“The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,”** says Yahweh. **‘As for Me,’** says Yahweh, **‘this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,’** says Yahweh, **‘from this time and forevermore.’”** (Isaiah 59:20-21) For the rebels, this is the end of the world. But for the redeemed in Israel, this is only the end of the beginning.