

Chapel Flock



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

[www.chapel-flock.com](http://www.chapel-flock.com)



Vol. 40 Issue 774

Oct. 23, 2013

## Worship Music

[Good Morning-Mandisa](#)

[Free-Mandisa](#)

[Born For This-Mandisa](#)

## Prayer

Lord, help me to stay absolutely committed to the assignment You've given me, ready to do whatever is necessary to finish the job. Forgive me for giving up so easily in the past when I ran into barriers. Help me to get more creative the next time I hit an impasse so I can find a way to do what You've called me to do. I know that by the power of Your Spirit, I can show much more fortitude in the face of obstacles than I've done in the past. Forgive me for being so easy on myself. I ask You now to teach me how to operate in Your strength and wisdom when I encounter impasses so that I can forge ahead to finish the job You've given me to do, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

" The Call"

Charles Stanley

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

(316) 247-3623

Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

[chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)

## Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

[KLOVE](#)

## Bible Study Sites

[Chuck Smith Through The Bible](#)

[Bob Coy/Teachings](#)

[Mike MacIntosh](#)

[Jon Courson](#)

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[Billy Graham](#)

[Charles Stanley](#)

[David Wilkerson](#)

[Greg Laurie](#)

[Virtue for Women-  
Cathe Laurie](#)

## Psalm 9:1-20 (AMP)

1 I WILL praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth (recount and tell aloud) all Your marvelous works and wonderful deeds! 2 I will rejoice in You and be in high spirits; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High! 3 When my enemies turned back, they stumbled and perished before You. 4 For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging righteously. 5 You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. 6 The enemy have been cut off and have vanished in everlasting ruins, You have plucked up and overthrown their cities; the very memory of them has perished and vanished. 7 But the Lord shall remain and continue forever; He has prepared and established His throne for judgment. 8 And He will judge the world in righteousness (rightness and equity); He will minister justice to the peoples in uprightness. 9 The Lord also will be a refuge and a high tower for the oppressed, a refuge and a stronghold in times of trouble (high cost, destitution, and desperation). 10 And they who know Your name [who have experience and acquaintance with Your mercy] will lean on and confidently put their trust in You, for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek (inquire of and for) You [on the authority of God's Word and the right of their necessity]. 11 Sing praises to the Lord, Who dwells in Zion! Declare among the peoples His doings! 12 For He Who avenges the blood [of His people shed unjustly] remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted (the poor and the humble). 13 Have mercy upon me and be gracious to me, O Lord; consider how I am afflicted by those who hate me, You Who lift me up from the gates of death, 14 That I may show forth (recount and tell aloud) all Your praises! In the gates of the Daughter of Zion I will rejoice in Your salvation and Your saving help. 15 The nations have sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot caught. 16 The Lord has made Himself known; He executes judgment; the wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. Higgaiôn [meditation]. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]! 17 The wicked shall be turned back [headlong into premature death] into Sheol (the place of the departed spirits of the wicked), even all the nations that forget or are forgetful of God. 18 For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation and hope of the meek and the poor shall not perish forever. 19 Arise, O Lord! Let not man prevail; let the nations be judged before You. 20 Put them in fear [make them realize their frail nature], O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

## Psalm 10:1-18 (AMP)

1 WHY DO You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself, [veiling Your eyes] in times of trouble (distress and desperation)? 2 The wicked in pride and arrogance hotly pursue and persecute the poor; let them be taken in the schemes which they have devised. 3 For the wicked man boasts (sings the praises) of his own heart's desire, and the one greedy for gain curses and spurns, yes, renounces and despises the Lord. 4 The wicked one in the pride of his countenance will not seek, inquire for, and yearn for God; all his thoughts are that there is no God [so He never punishes]. 5 His ways are grievous [or persist] at all times; Your judgments [Lord] are far above and on high out of his sight [so he never thinks about them]; as for all his foes, he sniffs and sneers at them. 6 He thinks in his heart, I shall not be moved; for throughout all generations I shall not come to want or be in adversity. 7 His mouth is full of cursing, deceit, oppression (fraud); under his tongue are trouble and sin (mischief and iniquity). 8 He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he slays the innocent; he watches stealthily for the poor (the helpless and unfortunate). 9 He lurks in secret places like a lion in his thicket; he lies in wait that he may seize the poor (the helpless and the unfortunate); he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net. 10 [The prey] is crushed, sinks down; and the helpless falls by his mighty [claws]. 11 [The foe] thinks in his heart, God has quite forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see [my deed]. 12 Arise, O Lord! O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the humble [patient and crushed]. 13 Why does the wicked [man] condemn (spurn and renounce) God? Why has he thought in his heart, You will not call to account? 14 You have seen it; yes, You note trouble and grief (vexation) to requite it with Your hand. The unfortunate commits himself to You; You are the helper of the fatherless. 15 Break the arm of the wicked man; and as for the evil man, search out his wickedness until You find no more. 16 The Lord is King forever and ever; the nations will perish out of His land. 17 O Lord, You have heard the desire and the longing of the humble and oppressed; You will prepare and strengthen and direct their hearts, You will cause Your ear to hear, 18 To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man, who is of the earth, may not terrify them any more.

## Psalm 11:1-7 (AMP)

1 IN THE Lord I take refuge [and put my trust]; how can you say to me, Flee like a bird to your mountain? 2 For see, the wicked are bending the bow; they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they [furtively] in darkness may shoot at the upright in heart. 3 If the foundations are destroyed, what can the [unyieldingly] righteous do, or what has He [the Righteous One] wrought or accomplished? 4 The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold; His eyelids test and prove the children of men. 5 The Lord tests and proves the [unyieldingly] righteous, but His soul abhors the wicked and him who loves violence. 6 Upon the wicked He will rain quick burning coals or snares; fire, brimstone, and a [dreadful] scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. 7 For the Lord is [rigidly] righteous, He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face, or He beholds the upright.

Other Scripture references for each specific book of Psalm....

Psalm 9:7 But the Lord shall remain and continue forever; He has prepared and established His throne for judgment.

Hebrews 1:11 (AMP) They will perish, but You remain and continue permanently; they will all grow old and wear out like a garment.

Psalm 9:8 And He will judge the world in righteousness (rightness and equity); He will minister justice to the peoples in uprightness.

Acts 17:31 (AMP) Because He has fixed a day when He will judge the world righteously (justly) by a Man Whom He has destined and appointed for that task, and He has made this credible and given conviction and assurance and evidence to everyone by raising Him from the dead.

**Psalm 9:10** And they who know Your name [who have experience and acquaintance with Your mercy] will lean on and confidently put their trust in You, for You, Lord, have not forsaken those who seek (inquire of and for) You [on the authority of God's Word and the right of their necessity].

**Psalm 42:1 (KJV)**

**1** As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

→  
**Psalm 11:4** The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold; His eyelids test and prove the children of men.

**Acts 7:49 (AMP)** Heaven [is] My throne, and earth the footstool for My feet. What [kind of] house can you build for Me, says the Lord, or what is the place in which I can rest?

**Revelation 4:2 (AMP)** At once I came under the [Holy] Spirit's power, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with One seated on the throne!

**Psalm 11:5** The Lord tests and proves the [unyieldingly] righteous, but His soul abhors the wicked and him who loves violence.

**James 1:12 (AMP)** Blessed (happy, to be envied) is the man who is patient under trial and stands up under temptation, for when he has stood the test and been approved, he will receive [the victor's] crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him.

→  
**Psalm 9**

The ninth psalm is to the chief musician on Muthlabben. Muthlabben is the death of a son. This could have been when Bathsheba's first son died.

I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou Most High. When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; you sat in the throne judging right. You have rebuked the heathen, and you have destroyed the wicked, you have put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. But the LORD (Psa 9:1-7)

And here is contrast: they have perished,

But the LORD will endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world (Psa 9:7-8)

Now you are building thought upon thought, "He has prepared His throne for judgment."

And he shall judge the world with righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The LORD will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in time of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Sing praises to the LORD, which dwells in Zion: declare among the people his doings. When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, thou liftest me up from the gates of death: That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which is hid their own foot is taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which he executes: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands (Psa 9:8-16).

And that Higgai is "meditate on that." "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." Just, meditate on it.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men (Psa 9:17-20).

O God, answer that. Put the leaders, the heathen in fear, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. We so often get an exalted idea of ourselves.

**Psalm 10**

Why do you stand a far off, O LORD? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? (Psa 10:1)

Have you ever prayed that? "Lord, why aren't You doing something about it? Why do You seem to hide Yourself when I am in trouble?"

The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the wicked boasts his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous, whom the LORD abhors. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffs at them. He has said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing, deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and emptiness. He sits in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the

innocent: his eyes are privately set against the poor. He lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lies in wait to catch the poor: he does catch the poor, when he has drawn him into his net. He crouches, and humbles himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hides his face; he will never see it (Psa 10:2-11).

And so he describes the wicked in his deeds. The idea, the consciousness is that God has forgotten. He hides his face. He doesn't see. There is a mistake that people oftentimes make, and that is, they mistake the patience of God for blindness. Because God hasn't already smitten them, hasn't already destroyed them, they begin to get a comfortable feeling like, "Well, God doesn't know," or, "God doesn't see." It is always a dangerous position to be in.

David says,

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand: forget not the humble. Wherefore does the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it; for you behold mischief and spite, to requite it in thy hand: the poor commits himself to thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out the wickedness till you find none. The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, that will cause your ear to hear: to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, and the man of the earth may no more oppress (Psa 10:12-18).

Psalm 11 is to the chief musician. It is a psalm of David.

In the LORD put I my trust: how do you say to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? (Psa 11:1)

My trust is in the Lord. Why should I flee to the mountains? Why should I try to hide from trouble? My trust is in God.

For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they might privately shoot at the upright in heart. Now if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psa 11:2-3)

I think that this is a very interesting question that we need to ask ourselves at the present time, as we look at the state of our nation. And we see the foundations being destroyed. The moral foundations upon which our nation was built are being destroyed. The liberal politicians are undermining and destroying the foundations upon which this nation was built, and if the foundations are destroyed, what are the righteous going to do? The thing is going to crumble. Even as Rome was conquered, not from without, but it crumbled from within, because of the rotten planks that once held the nation Rome strong. The law and so forth became corrupt, rotten.

The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in the heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The LORD tries the righteous: but the wicked and him that loves violence his soul hates. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous LORD loves righteousness; and his countenance doth behold the upright (Psa 11:4-7). (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)



"The Final Curtain" Chuck Smith

Introduction: Setting the Stage;

We are living in extremely exciting days. It's as if we were backstage at a play feeling the drama and excitement just before the curtain rises for the final act. The director is positioning all the players and seeing that the props are in order before he signals for the curtain to rise. This analogy is apt, for before our very eyes God is positioning nations and current events. The world is ready for the curtain to be lifted for the final act.

God is orchestrating the final events prior to the return of Jesus Christ. Have you ever stood dominoes on end in a long row? When you tip the first domino the whole line goes down in sequence. God is aligning world situations much as we would line up dominoes. He is getting ready to tip the first event which will trigger a series of events ultimately climaxing in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in power and great glory

Before we begin to look at world events in light of Bible prophecy, let me emphasize one point. I have no intention of telling you the day that the Lord is coming for His Church. I don't know that day. Nobody knows the day or hour (Matthew 24:36), but the Bible does say, "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night... but ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (I Thessalonians 5:1-2,4).

God wants and expects us to be thoroughly aware of the times in which we live. To this end, he gave us many signs to help us recognize the time of His promised return.

### 1. Looking Back to Look Ahead

Daniel is one of the most fascinating books of prophecy in the Bible. Daniel, a young Hebrew, was captured by King Nebuchadnezzar in the first conquest of Israel by the Babylonians. His prophecies give us keen insights into the events that lead to Christ's return.

One night King Nebuchadnezzar had a nightmare that greatly troubled him. He awoke in the morning terrified by the dream but unable to remember it. The king was left only with a lingering aftereffect of horror. Feeling that his dream held a message of critical

significance, Nebuchadnezzar called together all the wise men, astrologers, and soothsayers in the Babylonian kingdom and ordered them to explain the meaning. They asked him to recount his dream so that they could interpret it for him. Nebuchadnezzar told them he could not recall the details of his nightmare, yet he threatened to cut off their heads if they could not interpret it for him. They could not believe the unreasonable demand the king made. They knew that they could not reveal the meaning of a dream that the king could not even remember. They realized their death was inevitable. Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, told young Daniel of the danger he faced because of the king's decree. Daniel was being groomed as a counselor, so he too was to be executed. He asked the captain to tell the king that there is a God in heaven who knows all things, and that His servant Daniel, would reveal to the king his dream and what it meant. Arioch told Nebuchadnezzar of the young Hebrew captive who served a God who could answer the king's request. Meanwhile Daniel went to his friends and told them to pray that God might reveal the king's dream to them. God was faithful and revealed the dream and its interpretation. Daniel was quickly brought before Nebuchadnezzar. The king said that he'd heard that this young man could tell him his dream and interpret its meaning. Daniel answered, "No, I can't. But there is a God in heaven who knows all things. He knows what you dreamed and what it means, and He has revealed it to me." Then he continued, "The other night, O King Nebuchadnezzar, as you were lying on your bed, you were thinking of the power and greatness of your Babylonian kingdom. Then the thought came into your mind, 'What shall come to pass in the future? What will happen to my kingdom? How will the world end?' So God gave you a dream and has revealed to you what will take place in the last days. 'In your dream you saw a great image. It had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, stomach and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay with ten toes. You watched the image until a stone not cut with hands hit the great image in its feet. The whole image crumbled and the stone grew into a mountain that filled the whole earth.'" At that moment Nebuchadnezzar recalled the dream that Daniel described and pressed him to explain what it meant. Daniel explained, "You, O king, are the head of gold. God has given you a great and powerful kingdom which has extended throughout the civilized earth. After you, another kingdom shall rise that is inferior to you." In Daniel 8:20, this kingdom is identified as the Medo-Persian Empire which under Cyrus did indeed conquer Babylon. However, as the interpretation continued, this kingdom was also to be supplanted by the kingdom represented by the brass stomach, which in Daniel 8:21 is identified as Greece. This is a fascinating prophecy indeed, for at this time (approximately 600 B.C.) Greece was a small, almost unknown province in the western part of the world.

The kingdom of Greece was to be conquered by the kingdom represented by the iron legs which historically turned out to be the Roman Empire. Rome was as strong as iron, and it broke and subdued the world under its iron fist. So far these predictions have unfolded in an easily traceable historical sequence. But we are left with a prediction of a final world-dominating kingdom not specifically identified and not yet exercising its rule over the earth, for since the time of the Roman Empire there has not been a power that dominated the entire world. From the description of its makeup as part iron and part clay, inasmuch as the iron represented imperial Rome, the final kingdom will be related to the Roman Empire. The fact that it is mixed with clay indicates that it will be weaker than iron alone. This could possibly signify a weak attempt at reviving imperial Rome. We are told that the ten toes represent ten kings that shall unite their power.

This prophecy could easily be embodied by the nations of Europe that are presently binding themselves together with economic treaties, known as the treaty of Rome, for the purpose of forming a United States of Europe or much more powerful version of the European Economic Community (EEC). All of the economic borders within the EEC nations were removed at midnight, December, 1992. A common European currency already exists and may supplant individual monetary systems by the end of the decade. We are just beginning to realize the awesome ramifications to world commerce when such an economic giant is created.

The exciting aspect of this whole prophecy to Bible believers is found in Daniel 2:44, where we are told that it is during the days of these kings that the God of heaven will come to establish His kingdom which shall never be destroyed. This Rock, cut without human hands is Jesus Christ, who is coming again to establish God's everlasting kingdom.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard Daniel's interpretation of his dream, he acknowledged that indeed there was no god in all the world like the God of Daniel (Daniel 2:47).

Later though, Nebuchadnezzar defied the revelation of God and ordered a great image ninety feet high and made entirely of gold to be erected in the plain of Dura. By making it all gold, Nebuchadnezzar was declaring that no one would conquer his kingdom and that Babylon would stand forever. The king ordered all the people to bow down and worship this golden image. This is where the story of the three young Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego comes in. They refused to bow to the image and were cast into a burning furnace. There in the flames, a fourth man with the likeness of the Son of God joined them and protected them from being harmed by the fire (Daniel 3:25, 27). The question arises: Where was Daniel at the time that his close buddies were going through this ordeal? We must assume that he either bowed down to the image (which is very unlikely) or that he was out of the country at the time. This story contains a fascinating analogy, for Scripture tells us that the Antichrist is going to set up an image in the last days and demand that mankind bow to it or be put to death (Revelation 13:15). The three Hebrews are a type of the 144,000 Jews that the Lord will seal to preserve them through this time of fiery judgment (Revelation 7:1-8). Daniel's absence may be a type of the Church which will be mysteriously gone during the tribulation.

After this, Nebuchadnezzar went insane and lived and ate with the wild oxen in the fields. His hair grew long and covered his body like feathers, and his nails became like claws. He took total leave of his senses until seven seasons passed over him. It is unclear whether "seven seasons" refers to seven years or seven literal seasons, such as winter, spring, summer, and fall. Nebuchadnezzar could have been beside himself for one and three quarters years or for seven whole years. Regardless of the length of his insanity, he remained in this condition long enough to know that the God in heaven lifts up and establishes kings and pulls down those whom He chooses. The king, then, acknowledged the power of God until the end of his life (Daniel 4:31-37).

During the first year of King Belshazzar's reign, approximately seventy years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel had a vision. He saw a lion with the wings of an eagle. It was devoured by a bear with three ribs in its mouth. The bear was destroyed by a leopard. This, in turn, was followed by a fierce animal that he couldn't really describe. It was terribly awesome and had ten horns. An eleventh horn rose up and destroyed three others. This horn then became a great power, speaking blasphemous things. In many ways, Daniel's vision paralleled Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The four animals in Daniel's vision represented the same world-governing empires as the metals of the image in the King's dream.

Looking at history, we can see that these prophecies of Daniel have been fulfilled. The Babylonian Empire (represented by the head of gold, or lion) was overthrown by the Medo-Persians (breast of silver, or bear), the Medo-Persian empire by the Greeks (stomach of brass, or leopard), and the Grecian empire by the Romans (legs of iron, or indescribable beast) (Daniel 7:1-8).

### The European Community

What relevance does this prophecy of successive empires hold for us today? As we look to current events, we see the formation of the European Economic Community, originally known as the Common Market and now referred to as the European Union (EU). This is an organization of nations that have established treaties among themselves for commercial and now political purposes. These nations admit that their economic treaties are only a prelude to a future union of the nations into one nation.

The original idea for the formation of the EU came from a group of intellectuals known as the Club of Rome.

The confederacy of European nations is relevant to this discussion because each nation in the EU was once a part of the old Roman Empire. This could be coincidence, but it does fit the Scripture without straining the text.

The EU has increased to more than twelve member-nations at the present time, which provides a slight problem for those who see the ten toes as ten literal nations. However, some scholars believe that the number ten is merely a symbolic designation for an undetermined number of political entities. There are however, many other possible solutions. The latest maps of Europe list the nation north of France as Benelux. This is a combination of the three small nations of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. All are listed separately as member-nations of the Community. If they were recognized as one, there would then be ten nations corresponding to the ten toes. Other factors could also come into play such as nations dropping from the alliance. Daniel 7:8 tells us that an eleventh horn shall arise which will destroy three of the horns. This eleventh horn is identified as the Antichrist who will rise to rule over the world.

On December 31, 1992, the economic borders between the nations of the European Community were removed and a common passport was issued. This was the official realization of the dream of the Club of Rome.

To be realistic, we have to recognize a serious problem existed with the scenario. Western Europe could never rise as a world-dominating power as long as the Soviet Union existed as a major military threat to the European continent. The Soviets had been building a tremendous military arsenal and positioned much of their might against Western Europe. As long as the USSR had such tremendous military capabilities, the Soviet power prohibited Western Europe or the EU from prevailing. Even though the nations of the EU have a greater potential gross national product than the United States, and could conceivably become the greatest economic power in the world, they could never rise to world-governing stature as long as the Soviet Union overshadowed them.

This barrier has fallen. The whole Western world has been shocked by the events that began to take shape in 1990. The apparent collapse of Communism, the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, and the liberalizing of Eastern Europe sent shock waves around the world. With the collapse of the Soviet economy, it would appear that God is removing this last obstacle.

As we will find out later, God has still other plans to reduce the military threat of Russia.

### The Antichrist

Once God destroys the military power of the Eastern Bloc, the final world empire will be able to take control. From this confederacy of ten nations there shall arise the "horn" - a man of authority and power who will become the single most powerful leader in the history of the world. He is known in the Scriptures by various names such as "the beast," "the man of sin," "the son of perdition," but he is commonly referred to as the Antichrist. He will oppose all that is in heaven and seek to exalt himself above God (II Thessalonians 2:3,4).

The Antichrist will first come to public prominence with a successful peace program, and an entirely new commercial system (Revelation 13:4, 16-17). He will work wonders with the world economy and will be known for the miraculous. People will stand in awe of him and hail him as the savior of the world. He will satisfy the world's tremendous desire for security. We already see the powerful peace movements that have risen among the nations of Europe. There are growing peace demonstrations all over the world; the stage is surely set for the emergence and acceptance of this scripturally described man of sin with his plan for universal peace. There will be an apparently successful assassination attempt on his life but, miraculously, he will survive. As a result the Antichrist will lose the sight of his right eye and the use of one arm (Zechariah 11:17). The Antichrist will then be involved in an event that will mark the beginning of the countdown of the last 1,290 days before the Lord of glory comes to establish His eternal kingdom. Jesus referred to this event as "the abomination that causes the desolation" (Matthew 24:15). This same event is further described in Daniel 9. There we read that while Daniel was in prayer near the time of the evening oblation when the angel Gabriel appeared to him. He said to Daniel, "I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding. At the beginning of your

supplications the commandment came forth, and I have come to show you; for you are greatly beloved: therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks [or sevens] are determined upon your people and upon the holy city [Jerusalem], to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up [to complete] the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Daniel 9:22-24). The word "week," which in Hebrew is *shabua*, means seven and refers to a week of years, or seven years.

Several events are spoken of here. "To finish the transgression... to make an end of sins... to make reconciliation for iniquity," these all belong in one category: They were all fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus Christ. "To bring in everlasting righteousness... to complete the visions and prophecy... to anoint the most Holy" have not yet been fulfilled. They await their fulfillment when Jesus comes again.

Gabriel continued, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto [the coming of] the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [seven sevens and sixty-two sevens]: The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks [sixty-two sevens] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself [without receiving the kingdom]" (Daniel 9:25-26). This is an amazing prophecy. For centuries the Jews had been waiting for their Messiah, and here God told Daniel the very day of His arrival.

According to the prophecy, the Messiah was to come sixty-nine times seven (or 483) years after the command went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Because Daniel was using the Babylonian calendar, which contained 360 days to the year, we must multiply  $69 \times 7 \times 360$  which equals 173,880 days. On March 14, 445 B.C., King Artaxerxes gave the command to Nehemiah to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (II Chronicles 36:22-23). Exactly 173,880 days later on April 6, 32 A.D., Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey as was prophesied by Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout O daughter of Jerusalem: behold your King cometh unto you: He is just, and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass." Thus Jesus made His triumphant entry amid the shouts of His disciples who were actually quoting Psalm 118, one of the messianic Psalms. The section they were quoting (verses 24-26) begins with the declaration, "This is the Day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." On that same day, as Jesus cried over Jerusalem, He said, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! But now they are hid from your eyes" (Luke 19:42). This was the day the Messiah would come. God kept His promise. However, the Holy Spirit had predicted through Isaiah that He would be despised and rejected by men (Isaiah 53:3) and as the angel said to Daniel, "the Messiah will be cut off." In perfect fulfillment of these prophecies, Jesus was rejected, crucified, and cut off without receiving the kingdom.

The sixty-nine sevens have thus been accounted for, but the angel said there are seventy sevens determined upon the nation Israel. The seventieth "week" of Daniel has not yet been fulfilled. The end of the seventieth seven will bring the completion of all the visions and prophecies, the most Holy place will be anointed, and Jesus will establish God's eternal, righteous Kingdom.

Jesus Christ was cut off without receiving His kingdom. He did not bring in the age of everlasting righteousness, as is so evident today as we look around and see the world in which we live. The most Holy has not yet been anointed. Therefore, all the prophecies in Daniel have not yet been fulfilled. We have yet to complete the seventieth seven-year period.

The angel continued to tell Daniel, "The prince [the false messiah or Antichrist] that shall come... shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." In the midst of the week, or final seven-year period, he will break the covenant and set up the abomination which causes the desolation (Daniel 9:26-27).

When the disciples asked Jesus what the signs of the end of the world would be, He replied, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains, let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house, neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes" (Matthew 24:15-18). The fact that Jesus referred to this event as future in His day and related it to the time of His second coming precludes any interpretation that would place the seventieth seven in past history.

What is the "abomination of desolation" that Daniel the prophet speaks about? The Antichrist will make a covenant with the nation Israel. As part of that covenant, he will grant the Israelites the right to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and will promise to bring them peace. Then, after three and a half years, the Antichrist will violate this agreement and cause the daily sacrifices and oblations to cease. He will stand in the holy place of the rebuilt temple and declare that he is God, and demand to be worshiped (II Thessalonians 2:4). This is the abomination (a horribly disgusting act) that causes the desolation (the making of a holy place wretched). The word desolation also means "great agony or emptiness," and is used to refer to the Great Tribulation. At this point the eyes of the Jews will be opened and they will see that they have been deceived by the Antichrist. Many will then flee to sanctuary in southern Jordan. From that day it will be only 1,290 days until Jesus comes again in power and glory.

The beginning of 1991 saw an outbreak of war once again in the Middle East. This time a coalition of nations mustered against Iraq. Modern-day Iraq is the rough equivalent of the biblical nation of Babylon, making the many prophecies of the destruction of Babylon even more compelling. In Isaiah 13, the prophet declares, "The burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." In verse 4 he speaks of "the noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations." Notice especially the use of the plural designation, kingdoms of nations. Isaiah and many of the prophets predicted the fall of Babylon to the Medes and the Persians which was accomplished when Cyrus entered the city on October 29, 539 B.C. It is startling to note that in Isaiah 45 Cyrus is named by God 150 years before his birth as the one anointed for this task. God said that He would subdue the nations before him and loose the loins of kings. In Daniel 5, where the events in Babylon the night it fell to Cyrus are described firsthand, we are told in verse 6 that the joints of King Belshazzar's loins were loosed and his knees smote one against another.

The prophecy of Isaiah also states that God would "open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isaiah 45:1). To conquer the city, Cyrus diverted the flow of the river Euphrates so his men could enter the city of Babylon by coming in under the wall. When they came to the main bridge that spanned the river in the center of the city, they encountered brass gates which on this fateful night had not been shut. They were left open, exactly as God had promised they would be, and Cyrus was able to take the city of Babylon without destroying its mammoth walls or its magnificent buildings. Babylon continued to exist as a great and powerful city for many years. In fact, years later Alexander the Great conquered the city, taking it from the Persians and residing there until his death. Many other Bible prophecies, however, speak of the utter destruction of Babylon, predictions that as yet have not been fulfilled. For instance, Isaiah 13:5 speaks of the Lord mustering His host for battle with the weapons of His indignation from far countries from the end of heaven. This bears striking resemblance to what has happened in the gulf region during the time of the multinational conflict.

The United States, which could be described as being "from the end of heaven" from Iraq, gathered with many nations and inflicted heavy destruction upon Babylon. Isaiah 13:19 also declares that "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." Chapter 14 seems to place this prophecy at the time when God will bring Israel back to its own land. Jeremiah 50 and 51 also provide interesting insights into the destruction of Babylon. Jeremiah relates God's word that He will bring against Babylon "an assembly of great nations from the north country and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence shall she be taken; their arrows shall be as a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain" (Jeremiah 50:9). We have watched with amazement the deadly accuracy of smart bombs and guided missiles as they have systematically destroyed their targets in Iraq. Jeremiah continues, "Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate" (Jeremiah 50:13) This total destruction is related to the time that the Israelites have again been brought back to their own land and God has pardoned them. Jeremiah has declared that Babylon would become a desolation among the nations as the Lord opened His armory, and has brought forth His weapons of indignation against the land of the Chaldeans. God said, "Come against her from the utmost borders," that is, from the ends of the earth. "Open her storehouses, cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly; let nothing of her be left" (Jeremiah 50:26). God promised that all of her men of war will be cut off in that day. It is interesting that the strategy used in the gulf war was to cut off the supplies to the Iraqi army stationed in Kuwait. Again in the prophecies of both Jeremiah and Isaiah, God predicts that the destruction will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The prophecies tell of people coming from the north, and a great nation, and many kings being raised up from the coasts of the earth. Jeremiah 51:1 speaks of God raising up against Babylon a destroying storm. It is notable that the code name of the United Nation's operation was Desert Storm.

Babylon is known as the cradle of civilization. It is thought that the Garden of Eden was located in this area because the river Euphrates is named as one of the five rivers flowing through the Garden. If so, it is the place of the beginning of man's rebellion against God, for there Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. We also know that Babylon is the birthplace of every false religious system. Revelation 17 speaks of "Mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots." Harlotry, in a spiritual sense, is a reference to any false system of worship that captures the heart of man. Babylon was the mother or the birthplace of all false religions. This is where astrology was born, as man sought to understand the influence that the heavens had over one's destiny. Babylon was also the birthplace of commercialism. When the Jews were carried away as captives to Babylon, many of them embraced this commercial spirit and became such successful businessmen that they did not have any desire to return to Jerusalem when the opportunity arose. In Revelation 18 we read of the judgment of God that will come against the center of the commercial systems of the world, which is referred to as Babylon. It seems fitting indeed that when God begins His judgment of the world, He would begin in Babylon, the place that gave birth to so many forms of rebellion against God. But as Isaiah 13 points out, His judgment soon reaches out into the whole world to punish it for its evil.

There appear to be many parallels between what Jeremiah was saying and the events surrounding the gulf war of 1991. Babylon was to become a heap. It was to become a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing without an inhabitant. It was easy to wonder, are we on the way to seeing this prophecy fulfilled? But a significant part of the puzzle simply does not fit. The fiftieth chapter of Jeremiah tells us that this utter destruction of Babylon will come at the time when God again is dealing with the nation of Israel in grace. Nationally, Israel will acknowledge Jesus as the true Messiah and receive God's forgiveness for her sins. Clearly, based on the fact that the vast majority of Jewish people reject Christ, that time is yet future.

Isaiah 13 and 14 declare that God will muster His forces from a far country, from the end of heaven to destroy the whole land of Babylon. Isaiah places this destruction in the period of the Great Tribulation, a time coming upon the earth when God's wrath will be poured out against the ungodly, the sinner, the wicked, and the evil. The gulf war provided some startling parallels to the prophetic picture. And yet Isaiah went on to say that Babylon would never be inhabited, neither would it be dwelt in from generation to generation. The Arab would no longer pitch his tent there, nor would shepherds graze their flocks. It would become a dwelling place of wild beasts of the desert, and the habitation of every foul spirit.

Interestingly, Revelation 18:2 also speaks of the complete destruction of Babylon. John saw an angel from heaven who declared with a strong voice that "Babylon the great is fallen... and is become the habitation [or the dwelling place] of every fowl spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is very similar to the destruction described in Jeremiah. John tells us that Babylon will be destroyed in an hour, utterly burned with fire. We are told that the merchants of the world will stand looking at it, weeping and crying and wailing because they have been made rich by Babylon. By selling their merchandise to Babylon, they will have become wealthy, and then all of its beauty and all of its riches will be destroyed in an instant. We are told also that the sea merchants will stand back for fear of the torments of the destruction of the city of Babylon, and they also will be weeping because they had made so much money in bringing all of the merchandise to this commercial center. Again, these factors do not fit the current scenario. Today's Babylon could not be said to have enriched the merchants of the world. And yet, this appears to be its future destiny. Zechariah 5 presents a vision in which an ephah, an ancient symbol of commerce, was carried away and placed on the plain of Shinar in modern Iraq. This prophecy clearly indicates that this area will become the sight of a pivotal economic boom as the end times draw near.

Following the successful end of the gulf war, the world has turned its attention to the rebuilding and restoration of this devastated region. It is estimated that it will take at least two hundred billion dollars to restore the industry, the bridges, the infrastructure of the cities, the buildings, and all that has been destroyed in Iraq and Kuwait. This seems an overwhelming obstacle to economic prosperity until one considers that both of these nations have the oil reserves to provide the money for complete rebuilding. Kuwait has been investing billions of dollars around the world because their oil revenue has provided more income than they could spend on their own nation. An estimated one hundred billion dollars of Kuwaiti money is invested in international holdings.

Following a recent morning worship service, a man in the import-export business remarked, "Interesting you should talk about what you did this morning. I just received a call from an official of the Kuwaiti government. He's ordered one thousand Chevrolets from me. He said, 'Money is no object.'" A second man, who is in the oil fire control business shared that he had been offered more than \$150,000 to go to Kuwait for three weeks' work. It is easy to see where the center of world commerce is shifting to these days. The gulf nations will be spending huge amounts of money to recover from this conflict. The merchants of the world are going to be made rich as they sell the steel, the technology for the refineries, the concrete, and all of the things that are necessary to put these nations back together. It is interesting to note that Isaiah 13 ties the destruction of Babylon with the beginning of the Great Tribulation period. In the first five verses Isaiah tells of the destruction of Babylon, but he then goes on to describe events that will take place in the Great Tribulation period. Verse 6 begins with the words, "Howl, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty." He tells how men's hearts will melt because of the fear that grips them. When Jesus described the Great Tribulation in Luke 21, He spoke of "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth" (Luke 21:26). Again it is interesting to note that when the Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv, there were many casualties but only three reported deaths. The deaths, however, were not attributed to the actual blast of the missiles, but rather to heart attacks as "men's hearts failed them for the fear of the things that were coming upon them." The fact that the destruction is compared to Sodom and Gomorrah by both prophets is significant. It would seem that God is trying to give us a clue to further truth. When we look at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we remember the story of Abraham. He was sitting in the door of his tent in the heat of the day when he saw three men standing by him. He invited them to stay for a while that he might wash their feet and give them some bread. Abraham hurried to prepare a meal, and this threesome gave him the news that his wife Sarah would have a son. Sarah who was in the tent door listening to the conversation, laughed within herself at the promise. As the men rose up to continue their journey toward Sodom, one of them questioned whether they should hide from Abraham what they were going to do there. They told Abraham that because the sin of Sodom was very grievous they were going down to destroy the city. As Abraham asked if they would destroy the righteous with the wicked, he said, "Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). It was Abraham's promise that it would not be just for God to bring His wrath upon the righteous when the purpose of judgment, was to deal with the wicked. Abraham questioned, "What if there are fifty righteous in the city, would you not spare the city for the fifty righteous?" The Lord responded that the city would be spared for the sake of the fifty righteous. Abraham continued to negotiate with the Lord until he was promised that if there were as few as ten righteous in the city, it would be spared (Genesis 18:32). What was the outcome? When the angels arrived at the city of Sodom at evening, Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was sitting in the gate of the city and insisted that they spend the night at his house. He prepared a feast for them, but before they could bed down for the night there was a commotion at the front door. The men of the city of Sodom had encircled the house and demanded that the two men be sent out to them that they might be sexually assaulted. Lot pleaded with the men of the city to not do such wickedness to his guests, and they began to turn against him, making threats upon his life. The angels pulled Lot back into the house and smote the men who were at the door with blindness. They then urged Lot to gather his family and flee from the city, for they were going to destroy it. In the morning the men hurried Lot, with his wife and two daughters, out of the city. They urged him to move quickly as they could not bring destruction until he was safely removed.

When Peter in his second epistle warns of the judgment of God that is coming upon the wicked, he points out that in the history of God's judgment, He has spared the righteous. He spared Noah by instructing him to build the ark to take him safely through the destroying flood, and He delivered righteous Lot, who was vexed by the filthy way the wicked were living. Peter comments, "For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out, of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II Peter 2:9). So Noah can be seen as a type of the 144,000 Jews that are sealed to go through the tribulation and Lot as a type of the Church that is removed before the judgment falls. Along with the destruction of Babylon, Isaiah 13 tells of the day of the Lord's wrath and fierce anger that will destroy sinners. He speaks of the events of the Great Tribulation period as a time when the stars of heaven do not give their light and the sun is darkened. He declares that God is going to punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, that mankind for the most part will be destroyed. The heavens will be shaken and the earth moved out of its place by the wrath of the Lord and His fierce anger. It is comforting to know that according to the Word of God spoken through Paul to the Thessalonians, God has not appointed us unto such wrath (I Thessalonians 5:9). The Lord will surely deliver the Church before His day of judgment falls even as He delivered Lot, for the Lord of the earth is just. Paul tells us that the Lord Himself "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." He then told us to comfort one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:15-18).

As we look at the world conditions today, we see what Jesus described as "the distress of nations with perplexity" (Luke 21:25). The word translated "perplexity" literally means "no way out." We have in the United States great economic problems. Many of the savings and loans have failed, the banking industry is tottering, people are losing their confidence in financial institutions. We see gang war on the streets of our major cities that has claimed many more lives than conflict in the Persian Gulf. We have tremendous substance-abuse problems with alcohol and other forms of drugs which are effectively destroying millions of people in our nation. We see the rapid deterioration of our public school system. The moral climate of our nation is beginning to parallel that of Sodom and Gomorrah. We have a liberal media that feeds lies to the public as they seek to destroy anything that is righteous or godly. We have rap and rock groups that encourage children to participate in violent behavior and perverted sex acts. We have a government that spends our money to support artists who portray every kind of blasphemous attack against decency. You would think that with the huge national debt that has destroyed our economic system that our government would quit financing artistic works that are no more than a thinly veiled cover for pornography.

Many sexually transmitted diseases including herpes, penicillin-resistant strains of gonorrhea, and AIDS are reaching epidemic proportions. AIDS alone has caused over one hundred thousand deaths. We have problems with water pollution, air pollution, and mind pollution. How can we endure such dismal prospects for the future? We realize that the world copes by turning to many escape mechanisms. Many people use alcohol as a means to escape the problems of life. Still others seek to hide from reality through both prescription and illegal drug abuse. The pleasure mania that fills our nation is a part of the attempt of man to escape thinking about the hard facts of modern living. We seek to lose ourselves in stories and dramas that remove us from real life into a fantasy world.

Some portray pastors who speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as prophets of doom and gloom. The true doom-and-gloom prophets are the newscasters who tell us nightly what is happening in the cold, cruel world in which we live. In contrast, we as Christians have a glorious hope for the future. In spite of the hopelessness of the world and the inability of government to solve our problems, there is a new day coming. Jesus Christ promised that He would return to establish God's kingdom upon the earth. His instruction to pray that His kingdom might come and that His will would be done in earth even as it is in heaven is more relevant today than ever. The Bible, which has so accurately predicted future events, has also told us of a perfect world order that is coming. It speaks of a world where there will be no sickness, handicaps, death, sorrow, or pain; a world without pollution, crime, prisons, or war (Revelation 21:4-5). The vast sums of money that have been spent by the nations for making destructive weapons will be diverted into agricultural development as they beat their swords into plowshares. This is far from doom and gloom. It is the only real hope for the future.

When Jesus spoke of the signs which would indicate that His return was near, He described the very events that we see happening today. He told us that when we see these things begin to come to pass we should look up and lift up our heads, for our redemption is getting close. Over and over He warned of the necessity of watching and being ready. The question each of us must ask ourselves right now is, "Am I ready to meet the Lord?" When Jesus comes to take His Church out of this world, those who do not go up in the Rapture will be left to face the terrible wrath of God that will be poured out upon the wicked and evil world. As Isaiah said, "Howl, for the Day of the Lord is at hand" (Isaiah 13:6). When the Day of the Lord comes each of us will be in one of two conditions: believing in Jesus or not believing in Jesus, in Christ or out of Christ, saved from the wrath to come or lost. We really have no time to waste. Each one of us needs to make our decision now.

#### Electronic Funds Transfer

We are told in the Scriptures that the Antichrist will cause everyone to receive a number or mark on his right hand or forehead. No one will be able to buy or sell without this number (Revelation 13:17). This may sound impossible, but in the seventies we began to accustom ourselves to a cashless society. Various banks offered services using little plastic cards which held coded numbers. It was possible to go to the store with a card instead of cash. The clerk processed our transaction and with a simple signature we could obtain almost any item without the exchange of money.

The day is coming when money will have absolutely no value in buying or selling. The Antichrist will base his commercial program upon a system that transfers funds with coded identification numbers. All transactions will be processed electronically by computer. Those who are on earth after the rapture of the Church will be assigned a number or mark. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they have that mark.

On the front of my new Visa card there is an account number. But that number doesn't have all the information the card contains. Much more is actually coded on a strip of magnetic tape on the back of the card. The new computer relays are able to read my credit limit and other pertinent information placed upon the tape. All major credit cards carry that magnetic tape, which has been specifically designed for the new computer relays. Both Visa and MasterCard are offering new automatic debit capabilities through the use of their cards. Through this service, a written check is unnecessary; the card transfers the funds without a paper transaction. Soon every store will be able to set your card in a computer relay at the point of sale and automatically transfer the cost of the goods from your account to theirs. Many of the major grocery market chains already have automated teller services available. One large market chain in southern California was losing twenty thousand dollars a month in bad checks. To solve the problem, the computer industry developed a relay tied to the banks. Now the cashier can know whether or not you have the money in the bank before they accept your check. You place your supermarket card with your check in the relay and your check is either cleared or rejected. It's an excellent system and saves the markets considerable amounts of money.

Presently, most of the banks in the United States have installed computers, making it possible to offer more extensive services than ever before. Some offer a service that pays your monthly utility bills directly from your account. At the end of the month your bank statement shows how much money was taken from your account for each utility company. You never have to write a check or spend the postage to mail it. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) saves you all the trouble! Currently, our whole economy seems outdated and confused. EFT is an ideal system, because it eliminates the millions of checks each bank must process annually. All transactions for goods and services are done by computers. It's an extremely efficient answer to many enormous banking problems. EFT would also provide an ideal way of controlling theft. If no one can buy or sell without access to a computerized system, a thief wouldn't be able to sell his stolen goods without producing an identification number. But the computer would have all the information for each person using the system, and the thief would soon be apprehended. Stealing money would be useless because a person wouldn't be able to buy or sell with money. People's accounts would be safely tucked into the memory chip of a master computer that keeps track of their records. Think of all the crime this would eliminate. There would be no more liquor store holdups or service station robberies. It's a perfect solution for many of today's business and social problems.

In Europe, the World Banking Association already has an international money transfer system in operation called SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications). The Burroughs Corporation has installed two large computer operations, the main system in Brussels and a backup system in Amsterdam, Holland. The purpose of SWIFT is to make international banking transfers for all the major banks of the world. Funds can now be transferred internationally in minutes rather than the weeks it took under the old system. The computer automatically changes pounds to lira, or dollars to francs, making whatever exchange is necessary. Sixty major banks in the United States went on-line with SWIFT in Brussels on September 26, 1977. On October 19, 1977, the system was formally inaugurated when Prince Albert of Belgium pushed the golden button before a gathered group of dignitaries from all over the world. In America, we are well on our way to a cashless society. Many major companies no longer issue payroll checks, but will automatically put funds in your bank account so that you don't need to handle cash. You can use credit cards to make most of your purchases. However, there is one major problem with the credit card system. How can the retailer be certain that the person presenting the card is the one entitled to its use? Most criminals arrested in California carry from five to thirty stolen credit cards. When a thief steals a wallet, he's usually more interested in the credit cards than the money. With a credit card he can rob an entire account or immediately charge merchandise for future resale before the card is reported as stolen. Researchers are presently working on a foolproof identification system to eliminate the problem of lost or stolen credit cards. One of the suggestions is to use a laser tattoo. A laser beam has been developed that can painlessly brand livestock in one thirty-two thousandth of a second.

Laser beams are also being used for microdata processing. Using this technology, the entire Bible can now be printed on the head of a pin. It would be very easy to write miniaturized complete personal history so small as to be invisible, and have it placed on a convenient spot on your body (such as your hand) by laser beam. I don't know whether or not a laser tattoo will be the ultimate solution to the credit card system's identification problems, but it does present a very plausible answer. The tattooing would be totally painless and would provide a sure-fire form of identification that no one could duplicate or steal. Another suggestion to solve the problem of identity is to insert a computer chip under the skin that could be read by a scanner. This is presently being done to horses to identify ownership. Also, a pilot program in Colorado Springs is inserting computer chips in dogs containing the identity and address of the owner. The Bible states that the man who will arise from a confederation of European nations to rule the world will order everyone to receive a mark either on his right hand or on his forehead, and that no one will be able to buy or sell without this mark. It looks as if we're coming close to this today. Grocery stores already have cash registers where the checker runs a little electronic scanner over the uniform product code (UPC) on the items that you have selected. It would be very simple to hold your hand with its tattooed mark or number under the scanner so that your total grocery bill would be automatically deducted from your computerized bank account. The capacities for such procedures have already been developed and the possibilities of application are endless. The whole world economic system is moving toward the standardized system of Electronic Funds Transfer. More and more we see the fantastic bookkeeping capacities of computers and the tremendous advantages that can be gained by using them. What the Bible predicted nearly two thousand years ago was a scientific fantasy at the time, but it has become a practical reality today with the development of computer technology.

**The Stage Is Set;** According to biblical prophecy, the nation Israel had to be reborn so that the rest of end-times prophecies could be fulfilled. Israel's national revival was a vital prop that had to be set on stage before the final act in the drama of man's history could unfold. At four in the afternoon, local time, May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion proudly pulled himself up to his full height in the crowded Tel Aviv Museum and read these fateful words: "It is the self-evident right of the Jewish people to be a nation as all other nations, its own Sovereign State. Accordingly, we meet in solemn assembly today. Thus, by virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people and the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine to be called the State of Israel." Thus God has set on the stage the key players. The row of dominoes is aligned. Israel is again in her historic homeland. The European nations have come together and the Electronic Funds Transfer system is in operation. There remains one event to trigger the chain reaction that will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ. The ten-nation confederacy cannot step into control until God reckons with the atheistic nation of Russia and the Church is taken out at the Rapture. Prophetically speaking, it is not clear which imminent event, the Soviet invasion of Israel or the Rapture of the Church, will occur first. Either prediction could be fulfilled first, with the other soon following. The Church may or may not see Russia invade Israel. It's not necessary that we do. But it is certain that before the "man of sin" is revealed, the Church will be taken out. Paul said, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (II Thessalonians 2:1, 2). In other words, Jesus hadn't come yet. Some people had said that He had already come and established His Kingdom. "Not so!" answers Paul. "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (II Thessalonians 2:3). The term "falling away" is an interesting translation of the Greek word *apostasia*. The root verb from which *apostasia* comes means "to depart from." This verb is used fifteen times in the New Testament and only once translated "fall away." In other instances it is translated "to depart from" or "to leave from." William Tyndale, one of the first people to translate the Bible into English, and many other early translators of the New Testament, rendered *apostasia* as "a departure." If this is the case, this verse can be read, "For the day shall not come, except there come a departure first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." This "falling away" could very easily refer to the departure, or rapture, of the Church. Paul continues, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [is hindering] will let [will hinder], until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked [one] be revealed, whom the Lord shall... destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thessalonians 2:7-10).

The Antichrist will be revealed to those who shall perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. He cannot be revealed until he who hinders is taken out of the way. The hindering force that is keeping the Antichrist from being revealed today is the power of the Holy Spirit working within the Church. Notice the Antichrist will come to those who are unrighteous, those who are to perish because they would not receive the truth. Nowhere in the Scriptures is there any mention of the Church being on the earth during the reign of the Antichrist.

We are told that Antichrist makes war with the saints and overcomes them in Revelation 13:7. But those saints cannot be the Church as is manifestly evident by the statement of Jesus in Matthew 16:18: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is clear then that only after Jesus Christ takes His Church away will the man of sin be revealed. The Antichrist will then be free to establish a covenant with Israel and promise to help them rebuild their temple. When I have talked with Israelis over the past several years, they have tried to explain to me why they do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah. It seems that the claim that He is the Son of God is a stumbling block to them. Yet they are hard-pressed to explain Isaiah 9:6, where the prophet through the Spirit said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." I've often asked them the simple question, "Who gave His Son?" Many Jews feel that the Messiah will be a man just as Moses was. They quote the words of Moses himself found in Deuteronomy 18:15: "The Lord thy God will raise up into thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." I have asked them, "If he is just a man, how will you recognize that he is the Messiah?" They responded, "Simple, He will lead us to rebuild our Temple." Many of the rabbis are expecting the Messiah to come soon. In light of the fact that Daniel speaks of the covenant that the Antichrist will make with Israel and the prophecy of Jesus in John 5:43, when He told the Jews, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," it is easy to see just how ready so many are to accept the false Messiah.

The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel which will no doubt include the authorization to rebuild the temple on its historic sight. But Daniel tells us that he will break the covenant and set up the abomination which will cause the desolation, or the Great Tribulation. This abomination will consist of the Antichrist standing in the temple of God claiming to be God, and demanding to be worshiped as God.

It is interesting to see the great desire by many Jews in Israel to rebuild the temple today. Dr. Assur Koffman, a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; is a part of this movement. He has been engaged in extensive research to locate the possible site of Solomon's Temple, and has concluded that it stood some 322 feet north of the Dome of the Rock. According to his investigation, the Holy of Holies stood over what is known today as the Dome of the Spirits or the Dome of the Tablets. If his conclusions are correct, they would be very significant. The rebuilding of the Jewish temple could be accomplished without removing the Dome of the Rock. This would prevent a full scale Jihad (holy war) by the Muslims. This location for the temple would also have interesting ramifications in Old Testament interpretation. When Ezekiel had his vision in which he saw the rebuilt temple, he was ordered to measure it. In chapter 42:20, he tells us the temple had a wall around it about five hundred feet long to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place."

The Dome of the Rock has approximately seven hundred feet of Arabic writing around the top of it, both inside and out, which seeks to profane Jesus Christ. It declares, "God is not begotten neither does He beget" which is a direct attack against the New Testament truth that "God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). In Revelation 11 John also had a vision of the new temple that would stand in Jerusalem during the Tribulation period. He too was ordered to measure it, but was told not to measure the outer court, as it had been given to the heathen. If the new temple were to be built with the Dome of the Spirits as the site for the Holy of Holies, the Dome of the Rock could stand behind a wall similar to the one Ezekiel measured. It would be located in the area which would have been the outer court of Solomon's Temple. I believe that building a wall just north of the Dome of the Rock, giving the Jews the north side of the Temple Mount as the site for their new temple, will be the solution offered by the Antichrist. This ingenious answer to one of the most difficult political problems ever faced by mankind will cause the Antichrist to be acclaimed by the world as a brilliant peacemaker. The Jews will hail him as the Messiah, leading to the beginning of the final seven-year week described in Daniel's prophecy. Three and a half years later, he will return to stand in the Holy Place, and boast that he is God (Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:3,4). The Jews will then realize their mistake and flee to the wilderness where God has prepared a place to shelter them for the final three and a half years of the Antichrist's tenure. During this same period, the world will be going through a time of trouble unparalleled in its history. As Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, the tribulation will be worse than anything the world has ever seen before or will ever see again. These terrifying events are chronicled in detail in Revelation, chapters 6 through 19.

Preparation; Peter said, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" (II Peter 3:11). The message of Scripture is clear. We're coming down to the final curtain. But this raises a crucial question. What kind of a people ought we to be? First of all, we should be spiritual people. God is going to shake this earth until everything that can be shaken is shaken - until only that which cannot be moved out of place will remain (Hebrews 12:25-27). If our lives are invested in the spiritual, we won't lose a thing. This being so, we should be more concerned with spiritual issues than material things, with spiritual investments rather than material pursuits. We should also be diligent. The Lord told us to "occupy" until He comes (Luke 19:13). We must make it our aim to live fully each day to please Him. As we look at the world today, it would appear that the coming of the Lord is close at hand. Yet we do not know when it will be. It could be that the Lord will wait a little while longer; therefore, we must occupy till He comes. We should live as though the Lord were coming today, because He just might. Be diligent about the things of the Lord and yet practical about your life. Don't quit your job. Don't quit school. But all the while look up and lift up your head, for your redemption is drawing nigh!

( Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 810-812)

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