


TERMINUS –TIME SERIES NO.24 ESCHATA (or) THE LAST THINGS

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INTRODUCING THE SERIES

“Christianity and Time” is a Westgate desktop series viewing matters important to everybody from the perspective of life today and the prospect of Christ’s imminent return. The distinctive of the series is its prophetic stance.

The series is patently practical and essentially steers through the issues with scripture as its compass. The topics are Armageddon (1), The time of Creation(2), Time to Rise again(3), Time to avoid Hell (4), Time and Climate(5), Time to Debt(6), Time to Die(7), Time for Church (8), (9), Time to reach Heaven (10), Time to save Israel (11), Time for Jesus(12) Time to Love(13), Time to judge Nations(14), Time to judge nations (14), Time of the End(15), Time for God(Trinity)(16) Time to be holy(17) Time to remember Sodom(18) Time to Choose (19). **The booklets are inexpensive** and offer popular matter mixed with all the bible focus that these subjects deserve. The material is set out in sections while each study can be read in an hour the biblical material is researched enough to be of reference value.

These studies do not demur to hold up traditional theology or science theory or new moral mores to the light of scripture. There is a time ahead when the Lord will demand thorough root and branch change from the entire creation. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night amid normalcy but leaving the world unrecognizable in its wake. Momentous events lie ahead in the light of which this series is intended as a “jolt” and “early warning” of what lies ahead and a vibrant commentary and analysis of the times we now see emerging.

I commend this 25th study which is bang up to date in its treatment and brings to bear significant biblical prophecies that address the world we live in today. Series author *Bob Coffey* (Westgate Study Library)

INTRODUCTION - IS THERE ANY END IN VIEW?

The rather curious concept of the reduction of “end things” to “a time of re-commissioning” got me thinking about when “the end” in scripture is really the end or even “the beginning of the end” not just the “end of the beginning” and a sort of **interlude** before the continuation.

Whilst our knowledge of the new heavens and earth is incomplete nevertheless scripture does give us incredible detail on events that must emerge in the run-up to the millennial age. Indeed a very large section of the Apocalypse is given over to the last seven years of divine wrath that fall upon humanity after the rapture of the church in the seven years prior to the fully realized earthly kingdom of Christ.

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO ISRAEL

Israel’s return without any shadow of a doubt serves as a divine warning that the Lord is preparing the restitution of all things and that the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh. Thus the manner of life as we know it is in a huge incremental but swift transition in this 21st century.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Prophetic matters have shifted within our life-time and even the last decade towards the objective of world evangelisation and the undaunted effort and search for a comprehensive mid-east peace plan such as scripture predicts is under way. Politico-economic diplomacy fights to ward off total crisis as acute financial sovereign debt pushes the world toward grave dangers and we are living day by day with very serious military brinkmanship on the part of Iran.

LOOK TO JESUS’ RETURN

Any breathing space before a final major conflict is welcome but more significantly as Christians we are wise to live as if this old world system is about to fold and our out-redemption is imminent. Jesus said “when you see these things “Look up for your redemption is drawing nigh”(Luke 21.28).

THE WORLD STRETCHED OUT AND FOLDED UP

Despite this the historic eschatology of scripture allows us to believe that the earth will stand for one thousand years under Christ’s rule before it is cast off as an old garment and the life of the righteous is settled from the New Jerusalem – our heavenly home – to the new Heaven and Earth which the Lord has promised. Thus the world we know scientifically as it had a six day creation beginning will have a sudden end but only when it has run its scriptural term. Just as the Lord stretched out the heavens as a garment so He will fold them up when they have served sufficiently to demonstrate His power and glory even to a widely rebellious world (Isaiah 42.5, 45.12, 51.13 with Hebrews 1.12)

JUDGMENT AND THE ETERNAL STATE

Eschatology also encompasses consideration of the judgment(s) of God which are committed to Christ and the judgment of angels that involves saints. Eschatology will have something to say about the matter of resurrection which has traditionally tagged

the saint's completion on to the "last day" and written this into the Protestant orthodox confessions and catechisms. There is in this study scarcely more than an opening ambit on these great subjects but further treatment can be found in the Westgate study on "Resurrection".

CHAPTER 1

HAVE ENVIRONMENTALISTS CONFUSED US?

Dr. Jack Van Impe whose prophetic broadcast updates are very fascinating and informative is strongly of the expressed view that this earth and the mountains around Jerusalem stand not just for a long era but **eternally**. That theory seems a good cue on which to consider whether such thinking is out on a limb as it projects "world without end" consisting of three serialised stages merging into heaven **on this planet** into one eternal here and now.

- (a) The Present through...
- (b) To the End of the church age ...
- (c) To the millennium and still onwards...
- (d) To the Continued Future Eternity.

Conversely, is this view to be received from those some figure are a valiant vanguard of "New Age" Christian thinkers who foresee beyond a splendid new age for this present world to its unending life as an environment for redeemed mankind? This option I personally believe is essentially extended environmentalism not eschatology.

- (e) Have those a-millennialists (Christians many of whom now teach that there is not a millennium but rather an eternity here) who opt for the earth for ever and ever stopped to think how in all the world the procreating masses and their posterity left to be ruled on earth may abide in a fallen state and co-exist for a future eternity in a fallen world like this with the ruling millions of Christians and righteous ones in their eternal state? The idea is incredulous in the extreme and those who are apprised of the truth of scripture should tremble to dare present it as sovereign will of God.

GRAVE ERROR LURKS WITHIN A-MILLENNIAL TEACHING

When what the Lord reveals about the rapture, millennium and utter end of this planet and introduction of a new heaven and earth is so clear the falsetto eschatology of a-millennialism has to be recognised (1) as error little different from Jehovah Witness doctrine channeling the thinking of modern evangelicalism away from its moorings in the biblical and early church default position. (2) A-millennialism diverts from the authority of scripture and disregards our Lord's distinct scriptural teaching about the "end" of this world (the planet and the heavens) not merely to the order of things within it. (3) A-millennialism diverts from the teaching of the early church fathers taking refuge in Origen-style reinterpretation (4) A-millennialism renders diffuse and un compelling Christian expectation of the rapture, the bridal feast and subsequent glorious return of our Lord. (5) A-millennialism makes obsolete the divine dealings with Israel and His covenants with their fathers. For a believer who values divine sovereign governance of this world by grace and righteous judgment to embrace a-millennial doctrine is to demur from the sovereign will of God as revealed in scripture. In a curious but fundamental extrapolation orthodoxy finds its acid test in eschatology.

Grace runs on to glory, covenants resolve in the Kingdom fully realized, sovereignty inheres in the coming king.

CHAPTER 2

TALKING TERMS & DEFINITIONS

DISTINGUISHING THE ERAS

Augustine once spoke of the clarity that can be achieved once one distinguishes the divine economy and its development over the eras. Truth to tell he was but a poor example himself because he believed he was living in the millennium.

The idea of “eternity” is widespread in scripture and it is expressed by a number of Hebrew and Greek words. We need to understand the use of biblical terms in order to avoid validating lifelong, perpetual or age-long time spans of the bible as “eternal” Why is it important to “talk terms”? Because in connection to the “Kingdom of God” whilst the kingdom is eternal it is not going to be sustained eternally on this earth. Thus when we combine the words “everlasting” and “kingdom” we need to define whether we are speaking of an “age-long” perpetuation on this earth or defining an eternal kingdom transferable to the heavens i.e. “Jerusalem above” or “heaven”.

WHEN IS “FOREVER” “FOR EVER”?

The words GAOLAM in Hebrew and AIONIOS in Greek are roughly equivalent. Taking the NT word AIONIOS first it is used in 44 contexts and 69 times in all. Its singular is used mainly for “world” and the term of the existence of this planet but it is somewhat promiscuous and frequently also means “eternity” in 9 out of ten contexts in the Gospel of John this is the case and in every one of the 14 uses in the Apocalypse-but in all in just 64 of 102 contexts can it be categorically asserted to mean “eternal” Let’s next take the Old Testament. Here the most popular term is GAOLAM “an age” and it is doubled in the expression GAOLIM GAOLIM “ages of ages”. It is used with the word “still” in which case it is expressed as **GAOLAM WE AD** “An age and still onward”. This final expression is definitively “eternity”. There are contexts when the less exact definition of eternity is perfectly acceptable-but I caution a proviso of care lest over-simplification too easily convinces us that the earth is forever and the millennium is for never.

WIDESPREAD USE OF THE EXPRESSION

In sum Moses in the Law uses the “For an age” or “for ever” expression in one form or another in 44 contexts, the Former Prophets use it in 23 contexts or chapters. The Writings use it in 121 contexts including 82 psalm contexts and the Latter Prophets use it in 111 contexts-in sum within the Old Testament framework there are 480 such contexts and that can be expanded by multiple use within many chapters from two to six to as many as in Psalm 136 to 26 uses.

AS PREDICATED OF GOD AND MAN

The manner of the use of this expression teaches two things: first, that God has truly “set eternity in the heart of man”. Second, when we survey the contexts by no means beyond a proportion of them refer to an unending future eternity. Those connected with God, His person, covenant and mercy clearly bear the eternal connotation: for example such statements as “I live for ever” (Deut.33.40). Statements as in Deuteronomy concerning the “days of old” have no eternal reference at all but simply mean “an age (past)”. When the psalmist says “I shall never be moved” he is speaking of his entire lifetime”. The word is also used to describe “perpetual reproach” as in Jeremiah 23.40 and perpetual sleep as in 51.39 or perpetual hatred as in Ezekiel 35.9.

THE KINGDOM FOR EVER AND FOR EVER AND EVER

Now I shall draw a simple but essential conclusion from the use of GAOLIM in Daniel which has a bearing for the understanding of a realized millennial or perpetual kingdom on earth and a “continued and “eternal kingdom in heaven”. When Daniel speaks of the eternal life of the saints in Daniel 12.3 he uses the terms LEGAOLIM WE AD” – *for an age and still onwards.*” In 7.15 the rule of Messiah is described as “GAOLAM” or everlasting and not subject to destruction or overturning HABAL. In Daniel 7.26 the Messianic kingdom “*under heaven*” on this present earth is described as “a kingdom of an age” MALECHOTH GAOLAM when all rulers shall worship and obey Christ. Jewish thought encompassed the golden age of the Millennium but it is not pellucid (though traceable in Isaiah 65-66) until we come to the New Testament and the teaching of Christ how we are to understand the Kingdom in its relationship to this and the coming earth.

THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD AND OF HIS CHRIST

The seventh angel of the Apocalypse pronounced “The kingdoms of this world are becoming once for all the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ and he shall reign into the ages of ages. In 1Corinthians 15.27-28 Paul tells Corinth of this fundamental truth that all things shall be made subject to Christ at this (millennial) stage. Paul further pronounces Christ shall make himself subject to the Father that God may once for all continue to be all in all. This refers to the “new heaven and earth” and the ultimate sovereign rule of that permanent eternal state. (cf Reineker *in loco*). Daniel testifies that the teachers and soul winners shall shine in the millennial age as the firmament and the stars and shall shine still onwards when these stars are no more (12.3).

AN EXERCISE TO FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE CONCEPT

There are precisely 15 “for ever and still” references in the Old Testament and they all refer to God and His mercy, His covenant and His decree but none of them secure for this earth or its mountains the connotation of eternity. Examine the references for yourself – Ex15.18, Ps 9.5-6, 10.16, 21.4-5, 45.6-7, 45.17-18, 48.14-15, 52.8-10, 104.5(of the decree only-in the singular), 119.44, 145.1,2,21 with Isa.45.17 Daniel 12.3(of eternal glory of saints like but beyond measure of the stars).

CHAPTER 3 SETTING THE SCENE

WHAT IS SEEN IS TEMPORAL

When this passing world is done, When has sunk yon glaring sun,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know – not till then – how much I owe.

How better to plunge into this theme than with the lovely words of *Robert Murray McCheyne* who clearly viewed the world in which we live as having an end, a finis and a final day.

What does scripture have to say in support of that thesis?

(1) Solomon's statement in 2 Chronicles 2.6. "But who retains the strength or wealth to build a house for Him for the heavens and the heavens of the heavens are not able to sustain or endure him." Solomon in his wisdom shows that the house of the highest heavens will decay and cannot last as Yahweh nor indeed can the house He Solomon builds on earth – but the people of God can by covenant endure while God endures. This even 900 years before the coming of Christ was revealed to the wise king Solomon.

(2) Jesus said in Matthew 24.35 "Heaven and earth will pass away!" What did he actually say? I will take first the Greek dress of His words. *Ο ουρανος και η γη παρ – ελευσονται*. These words simply say that the heaven above us and the earth beneath us will "pass away in tandem – hence the prefix "*παρ*". The middle voice is rendered "taken away" "got rid of" and "put an end to" respectively by Greek authors *Xenophon Polybius, Dionysius and Euripides*.

The Hebrew *׀רב׀י ׀רח׀ ׀מנ׀* uses the future tense of the word "ABAD" meaning "go away depart die" and with that word the concept of "rushing" is associated.

(3) Jesus said in Luke 16.17 "It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the law" The Greek word *παρ-ερχομαι* is used and the Hebrew word *פ׀* are used in the context. The Greek *παρ* again conveys the idea of the simultaneous nature of the end of the physical heavens and the planet earth. The Hebrew means "glide away" "come to naught" or slip away". The LORD is at pains to point out that His word is eternal whereas the physical stars and planets we see have an end. As *Martin Luther* said VERBUM DEI IN AETERNUM MANET (*The word of the Lord endures into eternity*).

(4) Peter wrote in 2 Peter 3.12 "The day of God will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat". Readers should carefully note that this chapter contains "a parade of historically timed events" and that even the day of the LORD (v.10) is not the same as this event in v.12. The first signals the advent of nuclear fission and many other discoveries as signs of Christ's coming. This event is "the end" of the planet.

The Greek reads *δι ην ουρανοι πυρουμενοι λυθησονται και στοιχεια καυσουμενα τηκεται* In this instance the heavens are represented as continuing to be burned up and the earthly elements or atomic and sub-atomic structure is represented as continuing to burn with intense heat in which state it will melt to continuous burning liquid – the equivalent of a white dwarf. This is terminal not re-constitutional.

(5) The LORD'S servant John wrote in the Apocalypse 21.1 "I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" The proto earth and heaven were gone. Very much like a prototype earth fulfils its wonderful purpose and then is no more. The Greek word is *παρηλθη* meaning "passed without notice" "gone by". The Hebrew is *mrbl* which speaks of "passing quickly" "vanishing" or "perishing". Insofar as the concept is connected with the Hebrew word it means "gone" – "passed" it is used in such a fashion that, to create an example, no Israelite would be found after the Exodus left wandering in Egypt – they had all "passed from the land". The sacred writer tells us the new earth has *no sea* and the new heaven *no sun* to damage man. Everything is *καινη* – "absolutely new and different not refreshed or in a new phase *νεος*. John saw an utterly new earth encompassed by a spanking new heaven where our sun and moon no longer governed and *night* was no more. He saw a world utterly devoid of sea and though surprised he retained that important knowledge for all posterity. The Lamb is the light of this new world and in it there shall be *no more pain* or *sorrow* or *crying* or *death*.

This quiver of 5 texts should suffice to offset special pleading that this earth and its huge environing nebulae are eternal. All this is capable of being created by divine speech in less time than we might construct a shed or erect a tent – Yes! All of this is capable of endurance for a time– Yes! All of this is capable of being destroyed by an act of God – Yes! All we see around us is Eternal – No! No more eternal than my old coat!

CHAPTER 4. THE END OF THE AGE DANIEL WARNS OF BREAK-UP

A WORLD IN TEN ECONOMIC REGIONS

We now look at the disfunctionality of "iron and clay" in the last empire that emerges out of Rome divided east and west and the lack of solidarity in the final development of human government on earth before Christ returns. As the writings of Daniel show there is an intensely unsteady tie up of world economies where Europe is the chief consumer and where other guarantor powers of the day combine without essential unity. Daniel 2 33-45 predicted the world as organized in a ten region structured economy as now devised.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image with a golden head silver torso bronze belly and iron legs and feet of clay and iron is given in Daniel 2 24-49.

DANIEL AND THE MAHDI OR COMING ONE 2.24-28

The Great King responded and said to Daniel who was named Belshazzar (a)"Are you able to cause me to know the Great Dream which I dreamed and reveal it? The King was utterly dumb-founded at the thought. The audience can be fairly compared with that of David before Saul. The aptitude of the youth in both cases seemed unsuited to the momentous challenge of the occasion.

Daniel responded before the Great King and said "The secret of which the Great King has inquired no wise men, enchanters, sacred interpreters of written mysteries, (sorcerers) or soothsayers could have the ability to reveal to the Great King. But [*literal root of mrbl meaning "interwoven" (with it)*] there is Elah (*Elohim in Hebrew*)

Great God of the Majestic heavens Revelator of mysteries and He has made known to the Great King Nebuchadnezzar ("*Prince of the messenger god Mercury*") what and when [*Chaldee awh yd hm "What when it must be"*] – the significant words MAHDI are used in Farsi even today of the "Coming One" – the source in scripture *is in this verse Daniel 2.28. Ancient Chaldee and Old Persian have much in common* it must have come to pass.

THE MAHDI AND THE RAPTURE Daniel 2 29-30

Your dream and the visions of your head on your bed are these outstanding matters. [*Chaldee emphatic of "these"*] "You, O Great King, were with (your) thoughts [*Chaldee h[r]*] upon your couch – the **WHAT AND WHEN** it must be [*MAHDI*] "went up" [*Chaldee qls "were caused to ascend" a term used in Daniel 2.29 3.22; 6.24; 7.3 and bearing some relation to rsn (eagle) in the matter of "rising" or lifting straight towards heaven – posing an issue of something far higher than the statue that reduced it to dust – I take this to be an ancient reference to the "rapture" and "advent"*] After this the Great Revelator of mysteries caused to be made known to you **WHAT AND WHEN** it must be. (*This Mahdi key of Daniel respects Christ "the coming one"*)

(1) And I – not because of wisdom which is in me more than in all others who are alive was this secret revealed to me...

(2) But on account of what the Great interpretation of that which was made known to the Great King is...

(3) And because of the thoughts you have experienced in your heart or mind.

DANIEL AND THE ROLE OF LATTER DAY CREDITOR NATIONS 4. 31-33

You, O Great King, looked and behold "you were become" [*tyh Chaldee Peal 2nd person singular*] a sharply delineated or single statue – a precise likeness or of great gloom and darkness. The statue because of its head had frightened Nebuchadnezzar – for it delineated his features exactly in its face. The greatness of the statue is of a dynamic or growing sort. [*Chaldee ayyc*] The effect seems to be something shining with great luminosity. And this immense great image was beautiful healthy shining [*hhz*] Besides it had arisen in front of you or to meet you or it has arisen on account of you and its appearance is terrifying [*Chaldee lhd "that which made one creep away"*] He was a great statue or likeness. His head was of good gold. His breasts [*yhrd*] and his arms [*yhr[rd]*] of silver; his belly [*yhr[m A plural – "bowels" or "bellies"*] and his thigh(s) [*mhm Chaldee singular – so "thigh" Dec. 5b alternative to "thighs" dual construct which translators wisely prefer*] were brass. To take the translators position is to take the "upper leg" as brass – since *qrv* details from "knee to foot" (*cf. Judges 15.8*) and this agrees more easily with the syntax (*i.e. the verb*). The "singular" fails in face of "the dual construct" and is unsatisfactory because it leaves the character of the upper leg unexplained. So then, his "desirable legs" [*yhrqrv*] were of iron. This usage is the more apt when one recognises that during the period in question a new beauty entered the world through the gospel of Christ. His feet [*yhr[gr]*] represent the final stages of the Euro-development when there would be a proportion of iron and a proportion of earthenware [*psj*] in the feet. The "clay" literally is to be understood as "swollen or proud clay" [*rj p*]. The root of the word "clay" is [*pcj*] which means "to

make bare” “to draw away” “to let down”. How are we to understand the mixture of this “clay” that weakens the whole structure of the constitutional organization of man on earth? We are to understand it of politico-economic end-time union. The term “mixture”[*br[tm]*] means “men or companions of traffic and exchange” and “men becoming surety for liabilities or debt” or “men offering gifts” and “men sucking the lifeblood” This “swollen clay” suggests creditor nations perhaps from the Arab world or even modern China.

THE IMAGE FALLS AND WORLD GOVERNMENT WILL END 34-35

You were continuing – watching until when a stone which had been cut out or “formed” [*Lamentations 4.7 uses the word hrꝯ for the human form so that the stone of judgment is more nearly likened to the Christ (cf GIZEH – where Egypt's skilled stone figures and crafting is exemplified) cf. Also Genesis 49.24]* – which stone was not cut by (human) hands persisted to strike the great image upon its feet of great iron and Great earthenware and it caused them to be ground to powder or broken pieces.

At that time (the Mahdi time) the united mass of iron (Roman-cum-western powers), mass of clay (religious and decadent religious peoples), mass of brass (Greece) and silver (Persia-Iran) and gold (Iraq-Babylon) were progressively broken in pieces and became as chaff from the threshing floors in the harvest of the ages. A **Great Wind** lifted them and the entire place belonging to them was not found. But the Great rock that struck the statue became a great “range of mountains”[*Chaldee rrf TOR cp TABOR*] and filled the entire earth.

CHAPTER 5.

THE ARAB SPRING AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EGYPT

THE SOLEMN LATTER DAY JUDGMENT OF EGYPT EZEKIEL 32. 1-10

And in the twelfth year in the twelfth month on the first day of the month the word of the LORD came to me with vivid reality saying “*son of man*, Lift up a dirge against Pharaoh King of Egypt and say to him ‘You are made like or your have made yourself like a young lion *or village[rypk]* of the Gentiles; you are also like dragons in the waters and you “pushed” or “broke forth” or “engaged in conflict”[*jgt*] with your rivers and you stirred up the waters with your feet and made their rivers muddy or dirty.” *Egypt is shown to be bellicose and to have a history of warfare that disturbed the world.* Thus says Adonai Yahweh “I will also spread my net over you with a company of great peoples and they will fish you up in my net. Then I will abandon you on land – I will cause you to be thrown with violence upon [*lrf*] the face of the field and I will cause all the birds of heaven to abide or settle upon you and from you I will fill all the beasts of the Earth. *This picture is of the ruin of Egypt and the powers of evil and major political powers will have a feast at Egypt's expense.* And I will provide your flesh on the mountains and fill the valleys with your haughty pride. I will also cause the land of your overflow to be irrigated [*hqv*] from your blood to the hills, and the torrents shall be full of you. **And I will cause the heavens to be concealed or hidden when I “extinguish” or quench[*hbk*] you(32.7-also Cohen). And I will cause the stars to be dark as Kedar goat hair tents and I will cover the sun with a cloud [*m*] “a cloud” not *hm* [“a collection of clouds”] and the moon shall**

not shine her light.” *These phenomena may be more widespread at the time – so that what we might call “a nuclear cloud” will spread over the earth and the moon will be unseen as during foul weather. This is the day Christ spoke about and must be identified with the event Joel prophesied – the Day of the LORD.*

WHAT FUTURE EVENT WILL DARKEN EGYPT?

“All the stationed lights of illumination in heaven I will make dark over you and I will give there to be darkness over your land” whispers Adonai Yahweh. “Then I will provoke to anger the heart of great peoples in bringing about your affliction and break-up among the peoples over the countries of which you have had no intimate experience. Then I will cause great peoples to be astonished over you and their kings shall shudder in fear [*r*][*v*] – a horrid fear over you **when I keep brandishing my sword over their heads or against their faces** and they shall tremble each man for his own life in fear by the moment or ‘wink’ or with every ‘waking moment’ [*gr*] in the day of your fall.” This momentous time the prophet heralds envisages Egypt in what can only be described as a nuclear winter when the whole world is troubled by the use of nuclear weapons. It would appear that the “fire on Rosh and the Coastlands” of Ezekiel 38-9 is bound up with this event – and that the event affecting Egypt is a preliminary to a wider conflict. Are we then to look for what is in this chapter described as a bellicose act of the Egypt leading some move in the middle east which is countered by or accompanied by a nuclear strike? Could the Iranian capability be activated alongside an engagement involving more immediate ground forces based in Egypt? The “fears” and trembling” twice emphasized in this section are reflected in the Apocalypse and are materially linked to the development of an end-time conflict.

CHAPTER 6 THE THIRD WORLD WAR RUSSIA AND IRAN IN COMBINATION (EZEKIEL 38)

THE NORTHERN LAND 1-4

And "it happened" the LORD came to me saying, "*son of man*, set your face against or in the direction of Gog (*Hebrew la*) of the land of Magog. Now Magog was the firstborn son of Japheth whose descendants peopled the extreme recesses of the north. Similar but distinctively different terminology is applied to the Chinese who are called "Chin and Machin". The prefix "Ma" denotes "place of residence".

It is to be understood that this nation is Russia. Ezekiel like the original Adam is God's representative and no doubt when taken to Babylon in the early captivity he was in the flower of his youth. His loveliness was also of spirit since God shared His forward plans with this young man. The captain or leader (*Hebrew var avni* literally "*One who lifts up the head or becomes mighty*" so a leader who makes Russia great and who grows in power – "*a lifter*".) of Rosh Meshech and Tubal these are notable sections of the Northern race. Rosh the Russians mentioned in the 10th century as dwelling on the Volga and known in Greek writings as *οι Ρως*, Meshech were the Moschi – a people of the mountains between Iberia and Armenia and Colchis. Tubal would be the 5th Son of Japheth whose people developed as the Tibareni and are currently represented by the northern settlement of Tobolsk. Cause yourself to foretell future events about him.

And say "Thus says the LORD God 'Behold me against you O lifter of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal" As in numerous scriptures God invites those he speaks with to get a clear view of what He will do. The LORD Who is "lifting Israel" states plainly that He will come to collision with the leader of Russia. The LORD makes eight statements about latter day Russia.

RUSSIA – EIGHT PROPHECIES

1 I will keep turning you back with intensity (*Hebrew Pilel of bWV*) to your former state [*not "drive back"(Hiphil) but rather restore Russia after the revolution and communism to a greatness beyond that of the Czars much like Israel was brought back. The idea of reversing the revolution and the poverty of communes with intensity is inherent*] It may be that Russia will reclaim lost lands to the south which she formerly held in emigrating north.

2 I am permitting or imposing (*Hebrew ntn "impose" with b "in"*) hooks in your jawbones or handsome cheeks I am sure that God is showing that just as Leviathan was too much for Job in Job 41.2 He is saying that Russia is not too much for Him as He supports Israel in its latter day throes. God knew that Job unaided could not deal with the monster of the deep and here the LORD knows that Russia is also powerful in the sea and has a Leviathan-like submarine fleet which He, the LORD is able to neutralise. "Oil" is one interpretation of the "hook" – Jack van Impe's fascinating suggestion – Russia certainly has large natural gas resources – but not so much oil. This "hook" relates to the divine sovereignty over Russia.

3 And I will have you brought out to war. Russia will take the lead in promoting a third world struggle.

4 And all your expeditionary soldiers (*Hebrew ljj meaning attack and defensive capability – especially army divisions*)

5 Horses that draw chariots and pairs of riders (*Hebrew sWS and Crp speak of military expeditionary forces as organised in earlier ages but apply well today for the wheeled vehicles still depend on power which we call horsepower or cubic capacity and the drivers still spread their legs and use their feet to propel the vehicles forward. I understand the same principle may apply to interpreting the "locusts and scorpions" of the Apocalypse*)

6 All protected and supplied with weapons (*Hebrew ylk "arms" |klk "uniform, protection"*)

7 A great assembly of nations (*Hebrew lhq which began by being "called" together*) with full cover shield and small protective shield. This description fits a modern army better than an earlier one. Ancient forces usually bore one shield. In any future war the soldiery would be supplied with total body protection for fall-out and also have their body armour or "smaller shield" for defense against conventional armed conflict.

8 All of them handling swords each modern soldier has a bayonet and probably a knife besides.

RUSSIA'S ALLIES 5-6

Persia and Ethiopia with Southern Egypt and Libya complete with body armour and helmet. Gomer (comprehensive of both eastern Armenian peoples and the western wing of Germany) and all its armed wings; the house of Togarmah (*Turkey or in*

Jewish Tarum “*Garmania or Kerman in Persia*) the remote regions of the obscure north and all its armed wings (*Hebrew pga*), great peoples with you. The Russian leadership is assured of Persian, Ethiopian Sudanese and Libyan support and just south of its borders it can count on Turkey, Armenia and it would appear elements of western support which are hard to envisage at the time of writing.

RUSSIA’S NEW LEADERSHIP & CONSTITUTION 7

Establish yourself (*Hebrew Niphal of mk*) and be constituted (*Hebrew Hiphil of mk*) with a leader; you and all the assemblies that are assembled about you or under your command and you be for them a watcher. This command of God has to do with the area of influence and in our time it can have to do with treaties and international alliance and even satellite surveillance-cum- protection.

THE TIME FACTOR OF THESE EVENTS 8

From the time of many days you will be visited with punishment. **In the uttermost of years** or latter time (*Hebrew myvh tyrj a*) you will come to a land after its return from sword; **after its kibbutz gathering** from many peoples upon or over the mountains of Israel, which were continually desolate and she has been caused to come back and they were all dwelling in a condition of security (*Hebrew j fbl*) The time factor is

- (a) Subsequent to the Roman captivity – one spaced from Ezekiel's time by 600 years
- (b) Subsequent to the kibbutz movement when the modern state was founded
- (c) Subsequent to the establishment of many mountain settlements
- (d) Subsequent to the effecting of peace and emergence of security

SURPRISE AERIAL ASSAULT 9

You will rise against (her), coming like a noisy wasting tempest; you will be as a cloud to cover the land. You and all your armed wings and great peoples with you. Here aerial attack is suggested and the effect of modern warfare is easily understood by billowing smoke of explosions. The operative word in the assault is "wing" (*Hebrew pga or pj*)The root meaning of the Hebrew word "cloud" is both "spreading over to cover" and also "covert" or "mysterious" as if it were out of joint with precedent and immediately provoked an international outcry as to "Why?" it was mounted.

GOD PREDICTS THE STRATEGIC THINKING OF RUSSIA 10-12

Thus says the Lord Yahweh "It will come to pass in that day that affirmations or words of action will come up over your intellect or will and you will devise an evil scheme." It is important to note the unusual terms and expressions here. The first term is the *Hebrew rbd* which means "action taken simultaneous with speech"– with haste. The second term is Computed design – *Hebrew bvj* – which emphasises the accelerated plan-to-operation execution of this attack.

1 You will say, "I will go up over a land of open villages or scattered towns" or "soldier-leaders"...The nature of the modern state of Israel is not only characterized by open settlements but by "national service" so that each man and woman of military age has seen service.

2 "I will go to the undisturbed settlers who have security; all of them dwelling without fortresses or walls with neither bars nor gates"...To do so overland without meeting stiff opposition would be impossible – besides the attack has already been described as sudden

3 "To strip off (*Hebrew* *l/v*) what can be stripped from (*Israel*) and to pull to pieces (*her wealth*) (*Hebrew* *zb* used of "dissipating" cf kindred roots *azb qzb rzb* "to divide" "to disperse" to put to flight") It is in the precise usage here that the desired effect of the assault presents and this is not well translated by current versions.

4 "...and to turn my hand against the wastelands that have turned themselves around and unto a people after they have added to their numbers from gentile nations who have made wealth and made (*their*) possession dwelling upon the height (*Hebrew* *r/bf*) of the earth or the best of the earth." The ease of the offensive encourages Russia. The aerial vulnerability of the nation at a time of peace makes attack attractive and the benefit that would result from engagement with Israel's enemies is another incentive. The recognition that Israel's statecraft represents the highest and best in human enterprise is irrevocably linked to the obvious fact that over time there will have been a very considerable brain drain from Russia to Israel. The ultimate objective is to halt the progress and growth of Israel. The war would decimate and weaken the population beyond repair and will be geared to reducing the land to economic ruin. At the time of richest development and promise which lies ahead Israel will be most vulnerable.

ISRAEL'S FRIENDS 13

Sheba and Dedan, the travelling merchants of Tarshish and all their young lions will say to you, (a)"Is it to take prey you have come and to get spoil and have you assembled your (general) assembly to carry off silver and gold, to take livestock goods and gain and to gain possession of great wealth? Clearly there is wealth in Israel and this will increase but the representatives of the rich oil states and great merchant economies of western nations which formed the "iron and steel community" or the European nations and the blood thirsty young states (*or perhaps United States*) that represent military power greater than they will unite to contest the Russian action. The involvement of the Arab states suggests they fear a wider agenda involving oil resources cf "spoil".

THE TRUE REASON FOR RUSSIA'S SUDDEN MOVE 14-16

Therefore, prophecy, *son of man* (here Ezekiel is God's representative and in that long distant future day "the man whom God strengthens" who represents the LORD is to speak) and say to God,

"Thus says the Lord Yahweh "In that day when my people Israel *Sabbath* (cf. *Daniel's seven year end-time peace agreement*) in safety will you not know it?" And you will come from your place (*where you rose and were established*) from the great distances or far reaches of the north and many peoples with you – all manning swift armed military vehicles, a great gathering of troops and a mighty force (*The Hebrew* *s/s* meaning "swallows" or "horses" or "that which leaps" or "that which flies" suggests

aircraft or tanks or both). The nation of Russia is going to be opposed to the religious witness of Israel at this time – both her Sabbath keeping and faithfulness to the LORD and her agreeable perhaps even exponential development over a period of peace. If we were to assume the previous occurrence of the rapture and the retrenchment of materialist power the question of the nations leagued with Russia is more readily understood. You will come up against my people like a cloud to cover the land. It will be in the latter days I will cause you to come upon my land in order that the nations may know me in my setting myself apart as alone "holy" (*That is, "to be worshipped"-emphatic of the earlier "Sabbath" of v14*) through or by you, O Gog, before their eyes. So the LORD has determined to use Russia to teach nations that have spurned the gospel that He is Israel's God and that the absolute final days of the Gentiles when it seemed possible to pull true faith down prove to be days when a far reaching lesson on God's sovereignty is learned. It would seem that the "cementing of the covenant with Israel which is shortly broken" and the rapture fit together (*cf. Daniel 9 26-7*)

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD 17-23

Thus says the Lord Yahweh, "Are you the 'He' of whom I spoke about while indicating my action (*in my "act-word"*) in ancient days or former days by the hand of my servants the prophets of Israel who prophesied year on year or repeatedly (*Hebrew **mymv***) in those days to foretell that you would come against them?" And it will happen in that day that very day that Gog comes upon my fertile land of Israel in judgement, whispers the Lord Yahweh that my hot rage will arise in my breathing (*Hebrew **pa*** "hard breathing" or "nose"). God's "breathing" speaks of His patience or otherwise. His long suffering will have come to an end with the Gentile nations at this time and He stands squarely in the way of their chief-"Rosh" – the antagonist. For in my burning zeal or jealousy of rival (*Hebrew **anq***) and in the fire of my passing by I have spoken amid step by step action (*Hebrew **rbd** meaning "in act-word" and **rbd** has the root meaning "in a strictly ordered manner"*) beyond question there will be a great earthquake upon or above (*Hebrew **l***) the fertile land of Israel. And the fish of the sea and birds of the heavens and beasts of the field and every creeping thing that creeps upon the fertile earth shall shake or quake (*every single insect shall be affected*) from my face and every man who is upon the fertile earth shall quake (*every single man shall "jump" or "shake" or "tremble" Hebrew **[vr]***) at my presence and the mountains or "mountain tracks" (*meaning organised land holdings*) shall be broken (*Hebrew **srh*** "like broken teeth") and all the ascents or steps (*Hebrew **grd** which is related to **Jrd** meaning "routes" or "roads" – so there will be destruction of infrastructure*) shall fall and every wall shall fall to earth. And I will call (*Hebrew **arq** as a preacher*) for a sword against him on account of all my mountains (*or tracts of land*) whispers the Lord Yahweh – the sword of a soldier will be against his confederate and I will set myself up as his judge (*Hebrew **Niphal***) by deadly plague or "destruction"; and by bloodshed and inundating violent rain (*Hebrew **mvq***) and stones of ice (great hail) fire and flammable material (*Hebrew **tyrpp***). I will cause to pour down heavily (*Hebrew **rfm***) upon him and upon his army wings and all the great peoples who are with him (*an expression almost exclusive to Ezekiel and used only once elsewhere in Isaiah 8.8 of the "wings" of the Assyrian army – and probably indicative of paratroopers who were flown in to the high ground*). These assault troops will encounter conditions worse than

those of the first world war. They will engage their own confederates in action and be defeated both by aerial napalm like destruction and appalling weather conditions so that the advantage sought through disruption of Israel's road systems in order to gain a foothold will be neutralized. Over and over I will have magnified myself, I will have set myself apart and I will have made myself known before the eyes of great nations and they will know that I am the LORD Yahweh. It would seem that the LORD Himself acts as Judge in this overthrow and the nations are mere witnesses in this latter day tribunal of war.

CHAPTER 7

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT RUSSIA(ROSH) Ezekiel 1-6

'And you *son of man*, cause yourself to speak prophetically against Gog and speak luminously, "Thus says the Lord Yahweh, 'Behold I am against you, O Gog, prince or leader or lifter up of Rosh Meshech and Tubal. The "leader" involved as previously stated is the one who lifts up the head of Russia – who restores her confidence. Now it is very significant that God speaks a second time on the very same theme. I will keep leading you astray (*Hebrew abb*) and I will cause you to come up or be strong and elevated from the remote recesses of the north and I will bring you up over or upon the mountains or mountain areas of Israel. And I will beat down or smite (*Hebrew hkn*) your bow (*Hebrew yvq* meaning "that which is "fired" and "smiting the bow" means "breaking or overcoming Russia's power" from your north quarter (cf. Job 23.19) or from your covered places.(silos?)We are to assume that the weapons involved are stored in the north of the country. The act of this war of attrition between the Almighty and Russia which is complementary to the act in the former prophecy of drawing her powerful Leviathan from the sea is to wipe out her land-based rocket facility. In both cases the most significant Hebrew exclamatory word יָמַח is used. This word is employed by God when he wants undivided attention – as when he speaks to Ahaz or when he speaks of the virgin birth or the atoning death of his Son. This word therefore entails an Act of God which the world is awaiting. And I will cause the arrows (*Hebrew xj* meaning "iron heads" attached to flight bases) to fall (*Hebrew lpn* as in the case of Satan can mean "to fall from heaven") from your right hand. *Dr. Cohen* comments on "Smite the bow" skill in archery does not help. One might add "nor shall skill in rocketry". **And you will fall upon the mountains of Israel** and I will give you for food to all the fierce rapacious small circling or revolving birds, to every sort of wing. There is something of a give-away in this prophecy because small birds (*Hebrew rpx*) are not compatible with the furious carrion like character (*Hebrew fj[*) of eagles. The disposition of an invading army of paratroops and aircraft is being given to the air force of Israel for "as birds flying" the Lord will defend His people. The Russian forces will be given to every sort of attack aircraft in the skies. The sense in which Israel's forces resemble the sparrow is in their being attached to the territory at this period and flying sorties day and daily. They qualify equally as fierce birds that devour by their redoubtable modern armour and also as beasts of the field. The engagement of other world powers (elsewhere as in Daniel described as "beasts") is implicit. "You will fall on the faces of the fields (*Hebrew hdv*) ploughed and sown" whispers the LORD. The time of this battle is hinted as after plowing and sowing – these farming tasks are executed from October to December. The heavy rains fall in

January. It is *at or beyond year's end or towards the beginning of the year* that this event is to be expected to culminate in slaughter. And I will send (*Hebrew hl/v* as if to "send out a finger" or "to let go" as if a judgment held back was released) fire (*Hebrew va* is used of "war" but equally apt of "nuclear contagion") on Magog (the region of the Russian or Northern power) and on those who dwell in the maritime coastlands and islands of the Mediterranean (*Hebrew mya*) who fear nothing for themselves (*Hebrew jfbj*). The fact that the whole Mediterranean and presumably the British Isles are marked for "fire" by Almighty God is solemnising. Then they shall know that I am the LORD.”

THE RELEVANCE OF PAROUSIA OR RAPTURE

It is consequently of greater interest whether the Church will be withdrawn before this day which cannot occur before the end of the broken peace with Israel and that period is half way through the tribulation (*cf. Daniel 9.27*) We do well to observe with Dwight Pentecost "Things to come" (Page197) that those that "dwell in the land" are *κατοικοι* not *παροικοι* – in other words people who have invested all in the earth as opposed to "strangers and pilgrims who have been taken to glory. The "Hereafter" of Revelation 4.1 *μετα ταυτα* introduces the sequences of divine wrath when the Church is not seen on earth but represented as in glory.

THE NAME OF JESUS IN ISRAEL 7-8

So I will make known the name of my holiness in the midst of my people Israel and I will not shine (*Hebrew lha like the moon*) the name of my holiness still or any more or daily (*Hebrew dh*) This could equally mean "I will not pitch the tent of the name of my holiness". To put this positively it means that there will be "sunlight revelation" or it will become clear that the LORD Jesus Christ who tabernacled in Israel 2000 years ago was not coming back to stay at this time but instead had taken his people the Messianic Jews from the midst of Israel and so those who were left become aware like none else on earth that their despising of the name as to this day Jesus is called Yeshi, an acronym and curse.

And the Gentiles shall know from experience (of me) that I am Yahweh the Holy One "with" or "for" Israel (*Hebrew larvyb*) Behold it comes and "let it come" or "desire its coming" (*the Niphal "tolerative" speaks of the Lord's tolerance of such judgement in the light of His and his people (both in heaven and on earth) desiring the home coming and resolution of things on earth*) whispers the LORD. This is the day I have spoken of (*38.16 and in prophecy generally*) The word *rbd* in Hebrew means that it was in the mind of God and it was spoken of by God and it will happen as God said.

THE TELL-TALE SEVEN YEAR CLEAR-UP 9-10

And those who dwell in the cities [*Hebrew r* not *ryq*- because the enemy has come at a time of unwallled conurbations not in ancient but by our standards and era modern "cities" and towns] of Israel will go out and remove or burn them [*Hebrew r[b]*] I prefer the 2nd sense of "remove" [*r[b]*] because the word "burn" [*Hebrew qvn*] follows. The first word for "burn" means "to consume" and the second "kindle". The stress is on the clearance and burning of battle dress and ordinance, weapons, small body

armour, "bow and arrow" and "rod of the hand" and "that which elevates or kills" and they will burn or dispose of them by burning through them for seven years. Here the "bow and arrow" are further described as a rod in the hand with something that kills that lifts up or shoots like an arrow. I may now by virtue of the greater imminence of the day prophesied – whilst "speaking as a man" suggest the ordinance involved includes guns and other assault weaponry of the modern arsenal. The high significance of "seven years" is that the effects of this assault will not last into the days of Messiah's kingdom when earth will be renewed for an era. "They will not take wood from the field nor hew timber from the forest because they will make fire with the weaponry and they will skin those who skinned them and pull to pieces those who pulled them to pieces" whispers the Lord Yahweh. This expression assumes that in modern history of the end times Jewish people will have been stripped of their clothing, treated as beasts would treat their prey. This latter day war is pay back time for Gentile nations. The blood of Jewish persons slaughtered in pogroms and the horrid inhumane and unpardonable treatment of years gone by comes to remembrance. Cf. Ezekiel 38 for evidence that Gomer (Germany [*Note Togarmah is present day Turkey*]) figures in this pay back too.

A BEAUTIFUL INTERNATIONAL CEMETERY 11-13

And it will come to pass in that day that I will give to Gog a burial place in Israel. A Russian cemetery will be built to accommodate the soldiers who fall in the land. The valley of "passing along" or "overwhelming" or of "passers by" to the east of the sea (*Scholars are consentient it is to be along the Dead Sea though that is not currently Israeli territory-the Dead Sea did not used to be navigable by land on the West side*). Were the cemetery to be sited east of Galilee it would be in presently held Israeli land and in a passable sector. That area is not far from where the demon-possessed man lived in Jesus' day when it was a recognized place of tombs. There are two factors at play-is the Russian assault a mountain based invasion of is there a substantial southern flank dictated in a measure by the presence of the Jewish nuclear facility to the south? Second, would there be a discernible contamination consideration? And it will tie up or restrict (*Hebrew Ssj travellers*) and they will bury there Gog and all his multitude and they will call **the valley** "Hamon Gog" or "humming gog" Testimony to the sighs of expiring men. Also the melancholy of the eastern Chinnereth-the harp lake- or the tumult which is like the waves of Galilee in storm – would render this name apt although the silence of the Dead Sea would also be a suited requiem to boisterous raucous soldiers in their anti-Jewish belligerence and noisy .

For seven months the house of Israel (*The name for the nation – for the LORD foreknew that modern settlers would call their nation "Israel"*) will be burying them to cleanse the land levitically (*again the custom of burial and scrupulous attention to the detail of fallen bones will be employed.*) Today around Jerusalem this is the routine in place. And all the people of the land will bury them and it will be to them the occasion of great reputation on the day I gain myself honour whispers the Lord Yahweh.

Though Israel was treated with contempt by other peoples she treats the dead with the full honour of Levitical burial of a righteous Jew.

A PERMANENT TEAM OF OSSUARY SPECIALISTS APPOINTED 14-16

And "men of continuance" will be selected or after Levitical custom separated to travel through the land burying those who remained passed over on the face of the earth. In order to purify (*the earth*) from the end of seven months they will continue their search. The implication seems to be that either the "Passover" or the "day of Atonement" interposed – depending on the precise dates for the war's end. Thereafter the process that would continue until Messiah's reign continued. The implications reach even further because there is no validity in urging a general resurrection in this era which reaches into the tribulation – else no bones would be gathered. ***The Russian tombs will remain a testimony into the golden Messianic age***, hence the significance of its prophetic mention in such detail. The searchers will pass through out the land and a man who sees a bone or a skeleton shall place a "no trespass" (***Hebrew lxa "reserve"***) notice there until those who are engaged in burying bury it in the valley of Hamon Gog. And also the famous name of the walled cemetery will be Hamonah (***Hebrew "warm and sunny"***) and they will cleanse the land. This location may well demand the development of an adjacent city but the text does not warrant this in and of itself. ***Dr. Cohen*** comments "A city will be built to commemorate Gog's overthrow". The Hebrew **ry[** simply means a walled encampment and I would translate this a "walled cemetery" Just as there are famous war graves of the allies in France and a beautiful American cemetery on the outskirts of Cambridge, England, so in future time there will be an international cemetery of excellence on the east bank of the Galilee with the mass graves of Russians and people of other nations.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST AMONG THE NATIONS v. 21

And I will give my glory among nations and all the Gentiles will see prophetically (*by scripture and its fulfilment*) my judgement(singular). The Hebrew term **fpv** has the root meaning "set up" or "defence and deliverance" – so there will be a worldwide re-assessment of God in history and of the divine reality in the constitution of man's future. This would plainly be sharpened by the occurrence of the rapture in this period. This is specifically the knowledge of the divine judgment and the hand of God seen in such a way as the Egyptians saw such events in Moses time. We are not to assume that the understanding included a turning to the "grace of God" which I have executed and my hand which I have imposed or placed upon them.

ISRAEL COMES TO RESPECT MESSIAH YESHUA 22 cf 39.7

And the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh from that day and into the remote distance. (***Hebrew halh*** meaning that although the events unfolded here are for the climax of the "latter days" the divine economy continues on earth to days yet distant. This expression admits of a millennial era when the LORD'S kingdom shall come on earth – God's "set-up")

PENTECOSTAL RENEWAL OF ISRAEL v.29

And I will not hide my face any longer (***Hebrew rts*** meaning "veil my face" or hide one's person. We have to envisage the return of Christ as king as one interpretation of this passage) from them I who am pouring out My Spirit in profusion upon the house of Israel, murmurs the LORD in prophetic voice. Ezekiel finishes this chapter telling us that this nation will be gathered much as the church at Pentecost but gathered with

some permanence and then the great outpouring of the latter day which produces the evangelism of the most troubled time in all history will be sent by God. This is the final preparation for the return of the King which is entailed in the end of God's "hidden face."

CHAPTER 8 EARTHQUAKES, FAMINES AND DISEASE

THE PACIFIC RING

The increase of disturbances in earth's tectonic plates is very serious. A team of British geo-physical scientists recently visited the area immediately above the fiery Pacific fault and found the deep underwater volcanoes on its edge are very active. The deepest chasm in the world lies open alongside them stretching miles beneath the sea floor. We will hear more of this highly volatile region from year to year and in most months of the year too. I was told by a gentleman who visited and is in touch with his family in New Zealand that since the earthquake there have been over 2000 minor tremors. Doesn't that tell you that there is unnerving and continuing instability on terra firma.

EARTHQUAKES

Whilst there are half a million earthquakes every year only 100,000 are felt by man. Since August of 2011 there have been 28 quakes measuring 5-7 on the Richter Scale over four continents – but little activity of this sort was recorded in continental Africa. During December 2011-2012 there have been 14 mini quakes in the U.K measuring from 1.1-3.5 on the Richter Scale. The last major quake in the Midlands was in 1575. The Japanese have recorded Tsunami's from the 1500's. Tsunami is a Japanese word. The Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26, 2004 resulted in the deaths of 150,000 persons. It was the effect produced by a 9.0 under sea quake west of the island of Sumatra. Our Saviour prophesied as is recorded in Matthew 24.7, Mark 13.8 and Luke 21.11 that there would be "deadly infections and disorders" and "famines" in places.

TSUNAMIS

In the Gospel of Luke (21.25) we have a very telling reference to such an undersea event as we now call Tsunami. Luke writes that our Lord spoke of a "returning sound" or "roar of the sea" which echo intimates volcanic action and crash of underwater tectonic plates. The second word used in the context describes "a rolling swell" on the ocean surface.

UNIVERSAL WARNING

What I want you to observe from this short chapter and as a lesson from scripture is that the Lord speaks of the earthquakes as occurring in classic places and indeed they do. He also spoke of the diseases and disorders as occurring in classic places. If one were to live in Africa one would largely be protected from the majority of earthquakes and tremors but one would be in deadly danger of famine and disorders such as AIDS which has heavily afflicted that continent. In sum wherever one dwells on earth there are grave dangers to life and limb or to human health. Everywhere mankind is in receipt of the message that the King is coming soon-Shiloh-the hope of nations.

These troubling events and conditions that our Lord spoke of serve as reminders of the oncoming crisis of the ages. Jesus described them as “birth-pangs” insofar as they would become more significant and marked as the time of His return draws near.

CHAPTER 9 THE BIBLICAL ORDER

OF CHRIST'S TERRESTRIAL AND CELESTIAL SIGNS

JERUSALEM TRAMPLED UNTIL?

Dr. Luke, whose gospel is reportage from those who knew the master, has one very special prophecy in Luke 21.25. It reads in the A.V. **“There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.”** Luke sets the scene at the end of the “times or moments of the Gentiles and to convince us we have arrived in these times we need only refer to his word **“Jerusalem** will be trodden down of the Gentiles till this time. By the time of *the 1967 six day war* Jerusalem and its holiest place – the western wall had all returned to Israeli sovereign control. The temple area is not the issue in this statement but the city of **Jerusalem** itself. The “sun moon and stars prophecy” will in its time be unmistakable. The Apocalypse tells of increased solar heat and failure of moonlight and of stars falling to earth. These signs are absolutely ultimate because in v.26 Luke first gives the terrestrial signs and states categorically that the heavenly signs come afterward and after the critical and stirring validity of the earthly events, heavenly signs will even be understood and expected inducing unprecedented fear. This tells us that people of the time will know about them from the bible and probably surmise how some of them will occur through the use of Nuclear weapons on earth – as Joel prophesied there will be “on earth fire and pillars of smoke”(Joel 2.30). These are later and they will not occur before the rapture because “things will continue as before the crisis of the flood” in a steady social state till the Lord catches His people away. “‘They’ will marry and be given in marriage, eating and drinking” and working in cooperation in providing food. And, second, because whereas Christians passed through the two previous world wars the third war of Ezekiel 38-39“God has not appointed His church for wrath”.

INTERNATIONAL DISTRESS AND ANGST

Luke gives us terrestrial signs. The first of these is international distress. The word SUNOCHIA means “joining together “ and “fastening the belt” to combat a crisis. The second word APORIA (with distress) MEANS “impossibility in providing”. The providing is key to our understanding and the root POROS means “procuring” or as at Athens anciently “A way of raising money”(Both *Xenophon and Demosthenes* refer to the problem of “revenue” “ways and means” and “resources “ under the term *POROS*) It is ironic that Greece itself is locked in a sovereign debt situation at the time of writing and that it is asking banks to take a cut of 70% on loans to the national exchequer. There can, however, be no doubt that Luke – who was himself a Greek, is referring to the international debt crisis of the last days.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIOR TERRESTRIAL SIGNS

Since the days of Noah and Peleg we have not had such disruption of the seas. Luke tells us that there would be ECHOUSES of the sea and also SALOU. What are these terms meant to teach us? The first means a “returning sound” or “roar of the sea” encompassing the volcanic action and crash of underwater tectonic plates. The second word means “A rolling swell”. Combining the two we have a deep sea noise as would be produced by undersea earth plates grating – echoing and being picked up on sound monitoring equipment and this accompanied by mighty rolling waves on the sea surface. In the first decade of the 21st century we have been awakened to this exact prophecy of the scriptures taking place and gaining headlines in world news. In fact one of my neighbours in Bexleyheath was spared by the advice of an old woman that she should do some mountain sight-seeing – else she would have forfeited her life on the beach of an Indonesian island when the tsunami struck. Again we do not have to wrestle to discover what the bible is talking about – it has happened in our recent lifetime and will recur. The “heavenly signs” are delayed because there is a space between the “rapture” and the “glorious coming of the Son of Man” in Luke 21.67. In between there is something very terrible I believe – a nuclear exchange and nuclear winter. This is the source of fear that awaits the world. Joel connects it to the day of the Lord in Joel 2.30 when he prophesies “blood fire and pillars of smoke”. This short era sees the advent of the anti-Christ documented in Daniel 7 where there is a precise statement about the “defeat of the saints” and of right in the earth as war is waged until, that is, the Ancient of Days comes.

CHAPTER 10 WHAT NEXT?

VITAL THEMES

In other studies of the End-times I have developed other themes.(1) “Jesus is Coming Soon” emphasises the relevance of Christ’s prophecy of the return of the Jews for our understanding of His own return. (2) “The Rapture” deals with the importance of that truth and demonstrates the reality of the rapture from forty vital scriptural and apostolic and patristic contexts.(3) “The Great Tribulation” explains the structure of the great central segments of the Apocalypse and lays out the sequence of seals trumpets, vials and woes that constitute the sovereign severity visited by our Lord on the unrepentant prior to His glorious return. (4) “The Third World War” expounds the chapters summarised in this study in greater detail (5) “Heaven, the Christian’s Eternal Home” is an exegesis of Revelation 21 and (6) “New Heaven and Earth” shows how it is unsafe to infer from the bible that we remain on this earth for ever. Together with this (7) “Eschata” study which is designed to fill in some greater detail on biblical eschatology and establish an order of events these studies supply a serious gap in the field of biblical prophetic research and a new resource to quicken faith and stir us to devotion and evangelism.

ORDER OF EVENTS AHEAD

There are some important lessons to be drawn from the foregoing biblical references to our times. The nearest I am able to come to discern where we are in prophecy is set out in “Jesus is coming soon”. As I conclude this study I want to make what I consider to

be the best analysis I can arrive at from Scripture on the relationship of the present financial crises, the Arab Spring, Rapture, the Third World War and the State of Israel and the nations.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE RAPTURE

Our gracious Lord taught us that when the Son of Man would come again it would be as in the days of Noah. Now that is not a difficult concept to get your head around. It infers that there would be a serious element of violence and a serious concentration of spiritualism. The implication is that life otherwise would be going on as normal. There would be many marriages. There would be hilarity and widely enjoyed eating and feasting. Work and industry would be proceeding normally. The utter surprise of the event of Christ's taking His people home is described in terms of a "thief in the night". I believe it is safe to conclude that the Rapture is the first of the two hugely important events that we can expect and that the second-the third world war will occur later or should we say upon the heels of the Rapture.

THE RAPTURE AND THE MIDNIGHT CALL IS IMMINENT

The Rapture has to be heralded by preaching as the event of the flood was preceded by a century of preaching and a millennia and a half of righteous witness. Jesus said that "the gospel should be heralded to the entire world and then the purpose would be fulfilled". This, however, is not the only sign. The return of the Jews and their growth as a people mirrors what Jesus said of the Fig Tree. He taught us to watch what would happen to them and what the nations of the world would be doing. He said that there would be internecine struggles as nations took issue with their leadership. It would appear that these signs are all about us and should awaken us to the imminence of our Lord's return.

THE PEACE PROCESS THAT WILL END AS THE BIBLE SAYS

The fact that men everywhere are in quest of peace and that the Middle East peace plan idea is being pursued with vigour should be a sign of some relevance. Our Lord spoke of men saying "Shalom, Salam" and He told us there would be no peace(. Jesus was signaling the suddenness of a war which I believe will ensure when the Church is taken home. I take as my principle reason for this belief the fact that the Apostle says in Thessalonians "The Lord has not appointed us to wrath" (1Thessalonians 5.9). The fact that scripture tells us of a seven year peace plan that will be broken in the midst of its term occasions wary watching as such plans as assimilate closely to this conception of guaranteed order appear to be in the making. The plan of which scripture speaks may not emerge till the ghastly circumstances of the tribulation demand it immediately or it may be cemented immediately subsequent to the rapture.

SOVEREIGN DEBT AND THE CRISIS OF COMMERCIALISM

The terrestrial signs that I associate with the Rapture are very much about us. The absolutely critical world poverty that we read about in Revelation and the ultimate end

of commercialism or capitalism will occur in the tribulation period when shipmasters stand afar off and lament the fall of modern Babylon(Rev.18.17).

THE KINGS OF THE EAST HAVE RISEN

A further sign we should be well aware of is the pull-out of Western allies from Iraq and Afghanistan. This hurried exodus leaves a power vacuum in the Euphrates theatre which takes on the colour of the “drying up of the Euphrates”. So the land through which the great river passes is left open to forces of the east and military expansionism of Iran exactly as scripture prophecies.

IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME POSES A GRAVE THREAT

There is just too much equivalence between 21st century history and the bible in this second decade of the century to allow us comfort. The bellicose words and actions of Iran and the treaties and military tie up between that country Russia and China have already given the American military reason to prepare for a war that they see staring them in the face – hence the hurried termination of other military commitments.

NUCLEAR EXCHANGE & DIVINE MERCY

Should there be a nuclear exchange as now envisaged ahead of the modern world it is patently obvious why the Lord who hates violence should wish initially to take his church home and then to answer the prayers of the saints and martyrs in glory and quickly implement the “short work” of bringing the world to His feet and initiating the restitution predicted by the apostles. At this most solemn point of history we now stand. It would appear the church of Christ has a little time – the Christian must keep his or her lamp burning – we should encourage one another while it is called today. Let love not grow cold. Watch and pray for glory is nigh and trials are at hand.

CHAPTER 11 RESURRECTION

RESURRECTION IS NOT MORE OF THE SAME – IT IS MORE OF THE LIKENESS OF JESUS

First, resurrection must entail the continued existence of the Christian or righteous in God’s sight. Their continued life must include the faculties of the soul and the life of the spirit and bodily powers to be truly man. Our Lord in His resurrection had all of these and displayed memory and other aspects of the soul along with the capacity to eat and other properties of the body besides powers that were distinctly spiritual.

The manner in which the body is formed for eternity is not inclusive of all elements we now enjoy or endure in the body. Our stomach system and flesh and blood will alter. Job believed that “in his flesh and out of his flesh” he would see God. In one sense we will be without present provision and in another with like provision.

In our glorified bodies we shall be “like Him” (1John3.2, 1Cor.15.49). You may have to get used to the idea that you shall be more like Jesus than your old self! You will be more like Jesus than your old folks at home!

RESOLVING THE FUTURE USAGES OF PAUL

Much has been written on this mighty subject which is at the heart of the gospel message. Let me first define resurrection or ANASTASIS along with awakening HAQOTZ (Psalm 17.15,44.23, and Daniel 12.2). The Greek word reflects what happens when we awake in the morning - for the first thing we then do is to stand up. The fact appears to be that when we arrive in the world to which we go after death we arrive on our feet. Daniel uses the Hiphil of “awaking”(Dan12.2) which allows for a developing notion of awakening paralleled by that stated by Paul in 1Corinthians 15 where the apostle says “the dead shall have been raised” and reflected less precisely in 1Thessalonians 4.16 where the apostle says “the dead shall be raised first”.

All through the Resurrection narratives of Paul we are faced with huge verbs some of which, significantly, are in the past tense. In the Corinthian text we have the two verbs **κοιμηθησομεθα** and **αλλαγησομεθα** – a weak future passive and a future middle stem verb delivering the meaning "We will not all have fallen asleep" but "We will all be changed". Two other big verbs are used by the apostle as we read further in the text. When the trumpet does sound the dead “shall have been raised” **εγερθησονται** (1 Cor 15.52) incorruptible and we shall be changed **αλλαγησομεθα**.

WE WHO LIVE SHALL NOT PRECEDE THOSE WHO DIE

Dr Kenneth Wuest of Moody did not develop commentary on 1 Thessalonians but within his “Nuggets” he states “The word ‘precede, to get a start of’ teaches that the saints who are alive when the Lord comes will not precede the saints who died previous to the Rapture in receiving their glorified bodies for the dead in Christ shall take the precedence, being glorified first”. Paul’s expression enables a wider understanding of his allusion. Paul can categorically say we cannot “overtake” those who have been glorified because they have reached heaven and returned – but we can join them or better “meet and encounter” them as they come from heaven and we the living ascend from earth.

THREE THEOLOGICAL CHOICES AS TO THE FUTURE STATE

We have essentially three choices. **The first** is to believe that the righteous sleep over centuries – a doctrine propounded by Seventh Day Adventists. The idea cannot survive the statement of Paul “To be absent from the body is to be present with the LORD which is very far better” This choice involves the spirit rejoining the present body in Paul’s case after the lapse of 2 millennia. **The second** choice is to argue that there is no time in heaven hence we will not notice the difference. To analyse this seriously demands that the spirit which orthodoxy believes passes to glory does not recognise the loss of body and knows those met in heaven but remembers none of those on earth implies that faculties of the soul are less sharp not better. As to time there is sequence in heaven – indeed scripture says there was silence in heaven for “half an hour”(Apocalypse8.1). Pure mathematicians tell us that time is a dimension valid universally. The “ancient of days” is eternal and not subject to age nor shall we be in heaven. If heaven is to be real it has to be subject to sequence even if we are to walk by the tree of life or the river of life in the new heaven and earth. This choice oversteps itself in eliminating temporal sequence from the new earth on which we shall dwell. **The third** choice is to fight shy of the indifferent help afforded by the

intermediate state philosophy and return to Pauline teaching that we are made complete and awake complete when Christ “the resurrection and the life” calls us home.

SOWING OCCURS AT BIRTH AND RAISING IS DETERMINED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD FROM GOD’S BOOK

The place where our glorious body which endures for eternity is first experienced appears for those who pass to glory to be in glory. The place where those who abide till Christ comes gain that experience is on earth. Paul states categorically that he would not be unclothed but clothed upon of his body “from heaven”. While this may be interpreted as meaning “changed at the Rapture” studied in the larger context it strongly suggests that from “our members recorded in His book” our final bodily state is determined and not from the dust buried or cremated. When Paul speaks of “sowing” he is speaking of not of the old lifeless body that dropped into the grave but the original genetics of our life here and when he speaks of the awakening of resurrection he is speaking of raising of the person the Lord desires you to be with spiritual power, faculties of the soul and attributes of body that will be far different.

SPIRITS ONLY – THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

A grossly unorthodox idea of the “**intermediate state**” has developed alongside the biblical truth of the resurrection. It has been brought in to do service because resurrection has attached itself to Hebrews 12.23 alleging that we after death join the “spirits of just men made ethically good” whilst remaining humanly incomplete. The simple term TELEIOS used by the Hebrew writer is not generally understood as an ethical idiom at all but is rather a term of full completion. It may be rendered “having reached its end” entire” “absolute” “the sum of all its parts” and it is used of a fully grown man. The intermediate state idea has attached itself to the wrong proof text entirely and the Westminster standards need some attention at this point. All classic Greek authors use the term in such a way as to enable us to affirm the usage teaches that the “spirits” in heaven are complete as to “soul” and “new bodies”. They are wide awake. Death has been swallowed up of life. Those now in glory are both immortal and incorruptible. For each who passes to glory this truth becomes immediate experience. The **immediate state** Paul sets out saying “If this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God eternal in heaven”. In the case of those alive at Christ’s coming, those sick or those on their way to burial or recently entombed as in Elijah’s and Elisha’s miracles Tabitha and NT re-embodiments of the spirit – paralleling the timing but not the transformation of our Lord’s body. But Paul says categorically that those whose bodies pass to dust whether in cremation or by burial in the earth “have” a building of God. That is fundamental. *(For further detail on this engrossing subject acquire “Resurrection” in the current Westgate series.)*

CHAPTER 12

JUDGMENTS ELEMENTARY IN DETAIL

This study is not dedicated to doing any more than noting the variety and order of judgments as revealed in scripture but it would be neglectful to pass from the subject of the “last things” without reference to “judgment.

THE BEMA JUDGMENT

First let me state of the judgment of saints that it is plainly declared we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There is no indication that the myriads of Christians shall be dealt with in one day. I believe we should read 1 Corinthians 15.23 “each in his own order (*Greek tagma – army battalions*) alongside “We must all appear”(2 Corinthians 5.10) lest we confuse the judgment of the wicked with the judgment of saints. In matters of the appearance of persons before the Greek Bema they appeared one at a time or in order. There seems to me to be no defensible reason to postpone our individual appearance or that of our generation before Christ until the time of His second coming.

JUDGMENT OF NATIONS AT THE OUTSET OF THE MILLENNIUM

Second, we are not to confound the judgment of nations when our Lord comes in glory with the last judgment. Nations will indeed be set in order and elements from all nations will face the *κολασις* or corrective judgment announced by Christ in Matthew 25.46. This international restitution is not parabolic but is decreed in connection with Christ’s glorious return to earth after which a thousand years must run before the day of judgment of the wicked.

THE JUDGMENT OF THOSE WHO REJECT CHRIST AND DO EVIL

Third, the wicked are judged before the Great White Throne of Christ – before which heaven and earth flee and all the spiritually dead then appear from hell to receive sentence. This judgment by biblical description has to be after the millennium. This is an occasion – which we call a day – because there is no formal trial which demands other evidence than that written in the books which record every man’s works and whether a man appears in the book of life. As the unrighteous dead will fail on account of evil works not wrought under inspiration of the Spirit and through not having experienced the life of God in the new birth they shall go away into the second death.

THE JUDGMENT OF ANGELS

The judgment of the fallen angels who are bound in chains is also in the hands of Christ and we are to presume from the reference in 1Corinthians 6.3 that we are to be witnesses in respect of this procedure of which we have no further intelligence than that.

*A good follow through to this study would be “Coming Soon” in the Westgate series.
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