

Unveiling the Mysteries of the Ages: From Eden to the Millennium - Bola Olu-Jordan

Introduction

This message is an attempt to revive and rekindle the flame in believers, whose hearts have become cold by the wave of harmless but strange gospel being substituted as the Gospel of Christ today. It is bizarre how commitment to a religious system is substituted for being a Christian and how passing through a Bible course is a qualification for appointment as a spiritual leader.

It is obvious that we live in the midst of a religious but ungodly generation. Most gatherings are not of those hungry for God and His righteousness but their benefits. End time topics have become scarce on the pulpits that many official pastors and leaders don't even know the sequence of events of the last days, so how can followers know. Yet, we are saved for this time! It is important for the wise among the virgins to keep their lamp trimmed and oil burning. Denominational title or membership does not guarantee being a part of the church that will be taken away by the Lord.

There are different beliefs on these topics, each individual or group claiming divine revelation. The truth is that we only "know in part." The Holy Spirit is the ultimate Revealer of secrets. He promised to make known to us in the last days, some mysteries which have been sealed and hidden from the ages, unknown even to the saints who lived generations before Christ. As Ephesians 3:5 says, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

Each of the topics could take a thousand pages and we would still not be done with the introduction. However, some topics are discussed with emphasis, allowing the scriptures to interpret scriptures. Nothing is exhaustive but we trust that it will encourage us like the Berean Christians, to search the scriptures to see if these things are so.

Do not read this message with bias or with a doctrinal mentality. Because of the constraint of space, it will be beneficial for readers to look into the many Bible references for clarity. Let the Lord Himself reveal the truth to you beyond this message. Do not believe because you have to, but because it is being made real to you by the Holy Spirit (1John 2:27). Whatsoever that is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). He that has ears, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the church.

The Eternal Plan of God

Where there is a king, there must be a domain, otherwise, there would not be a kingdom, for the kingdom is the *king's domain*.

Heaven is God's domain. His plan is to have His Son rule and reign on earth as He does in heaven. This is because every kingdom is perpetuated by the seed-line.

Satan wanted more than just to be the most beautiful and highest ranking angel in heaven. He wanted to rule. But he knew he could never achieve that desire because he was created a ministering being, not a ruling spirit. In order to achieve his covetous desire, he rebelled and attempted to take the kingdom of God by force. He failed and God sent him out of heaven to the earth where he rules it as his own (Ezek. 28:12-19).

Since God's will must be done on earth as it is in heaven, God created Adam, his seed-line, made in His own image and likeness and put him in the Garden to take the rule from Satan. Satan recognized God's plan. He was not ready to lose the earth as he lost heaven. He determined to rebel against the Son on earth as he did with the Father in heaven.

However, two things were not yet in place with Adam in the Garden. Satan recognized these and took advantage of them:

1. Adam was in the Garden as a 'child.' It takes a Son, not a child to take charge of his father's kingdom. "Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." (Gal 4:1-3). Adam as a 'child' was still "in bondage under the "elements of the world." Although we come to God as a child, we do not remain a child or childish. There is a need for us to mature as God is bringing sons, not children to glory (Heb.2:10). Ironically, what better 'tutor and governor' could train Adam than the adversary himself!

Sometimes, God uses the enemy to mature his children. We see this often in His dealings with Israel. In Egypt, a type of the earth under Satan, Moses the would-be deliverer of Israel and a type of Adam was under 'tutor and governor' Pharaoh, a type of Satan and the adversary of the people of God. Moses learned all the tricks and secrets of Pharaoh in Egypt and returned to defeat Pharaoh and to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Adam was to be trained and return as the Messiah (second Adam - 1Cor. 15:45-47) to defeat and take the kingdom from Satan. That is when Adam would fulfil the plan of God to rule, reign, replenish and have dominion on earth. This is consistent with instances where God called some wicked kings like Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" and used them to achieve His purpose (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; Jer. 25:9; 27:6).

God will not mature His Son by fighting for Him, otherwise, the Son would never know how to fight. "Though he (Jesus) were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8) Adam had to fight and defeat the enemy on merit, lest Satan cried foul. God would prove to Satan that Adam was his seed-line and that His power was in Him. Given a fair play, His Son would defeat him on earth as God defeated him in heaven. So God left Adam one-on-one with Satan to be his "tutor and governor until the time appointed of the father..." "when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1Cor. 15:28).

2. Another thing Satan took advantage of was that Adam was alone in the Garden. God never leaves His children alone because He Himself is not alone – He is in union with the Trinity (Gen. 1:26). Jesus constantly affirms His union with the Father (John 8:16; John 14:18; Eccl. 4:9-11). That is the style of rule in heaven and so must be on earth.

Satan knew that Adam could never achieve destiny by being alone. Even God said: “it is not good that man should be alone.” (Gen. 2:18). Though Adam was made the head, he needed a body to be complete and to be in union. He must be in union on earth as God is in heaven. Until then, he was no threat to Satan.

This union would not come cheap because it has to be with a body like him not with the animals around him. It would cost him a ‘death.’ “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.” (Gen. 2:21-22).

Eve was the mystery that would seal Adam’s destiny and also Satan’s fate. Her presence in the Garden was the beginning of Adam’s success and Satan’s trouble. Satan moved in swiftly to destroy her.

We can draw a similarity from this and the church. The church also is the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3:3-5). As Adam ‘died’ for Eve to emerge, Jesus also died for the church to emerge. As Satan tried so much to destroy Eve, so also he is trying to destroy the church, but hallelujah, the gates of hell cannot prevail over the church (Mat. 16:18). As Eve was the bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, so also the church is the bone and flesh of Christ, i.e. the body of Christ, (1Cor. 12:27; Col. 2:17).

This union is also reflected in the leadership of the church which is the spiritual kingdom of God on earth. Christ alone is the head of the church and believers, though many are one body and in union with Him (Rom. 12:5). Today, Satan has divided the church into denominations with the founder, overseer, owner, etc. as the head. This is opposed to the early church pattern designed by Jesus where leadership is always by plurality of people called “elders” (Acts 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22; 21:18; 1Tim. 5:17; Tit 1:5; Jas. 5:14; 1Pet. 5:1). Their calling is a spiritual function, not a position with title as we see today. But position, power, importance, title, ambition, empire, etc., are some of the reasons denominationalism will continue to thrive despite the prayer of Jesus in John 17:22.

The Fall

So we see that woman is a powerful creation of God, perhaps, more powerful than man. As Eve was Satan’s trouble, so is woman, and till eternity, woman will forever be in Satan’s line of fire and a tool in his hands to truncate God’s plan (Rev. 12:13-17 & Rev. 17).

Although Satan cannot create, but he can make a caricature of the things of God. He knew how powerful Eve could be in the plan of God, so he created his own "Eve"... "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH... drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (Rev. 17:5-6). Other name for this woman is religion or confusion, and it is a trusted tool that Satan has been using in trying to truncate the plans of God from ages.

We must understand that everything that happened in the Garden of Eden was according to God's foreknowledge, otherwise He is not God. Even the very hairs on our heads are numbered and none falls without His knowledge. He is a being that knows the end from the beginning "and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. 46:10). He is Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omniscience (Rev. 9:6).

Satan didn't spin a surprise on God and put Him in a maze to scamper for escape when he rebelled in heaven, and God was too glad that He wasn't dethroned (sic). At the slightest opportunity, He quickly sent Satan out and He was saved by the whiskers? That is sacrilegious! God is not competing with the devil, He is God. Also, when he truncated Adam's destiny in the Garden, it was not a mistake on God's part. God wasn't doing trial and error while Satan was constantly checkmating Him. As powerful as Satan is, he is a created being, mere clay in the hands of the Potter (Jer. 18:4; Rom. 9:21). It is erroneous to believe that Satan is 'fighting' God. If a created being could fight God, then where is God's Omnipotence? He is God and everything is according to His foreknowledge and order (Rom. 9:15-23).

He created everything for His pleasure (Isa. 46:10; Rev. 4:11). All things are according to His foreknowledge, design, consent and complete even before the foundation of the world. That is why He is God.

God put three types trees in the Garden: (1) "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (2) "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden," (3) "and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:9). We may ask if God knew Adam would eat from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. If He did, why did He still put it there, knowing the grave consequence? As we said earlier, God is God: He will train and mature His Son just as a good father would train his son to have victory over the enemy. David said that God trained his hands to war "so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms" (2Sam. 22:35; Psa. 18:34).

This perhaps might explain why it appeared that sometimes, God would not fight our wars and battles and defeat our enemies as we expect. He is teaching our hands to war and fingers to fight (Psa. 144:1). He is raising sons in dominion. He will not do for us what He has given us power to do. His Son would take the Kingdom back from Satan by Himself, because He is a Son and He has the power to defeat the enemy as God did.

This is where there is a clear separation between test, trials, tribulations and temptation. God will not use an untried and untested vessel. He took Israel through the wilderness for forty years to try their hearts (Deut. 8:2). He also left the enemies on their way to Canaan to train them in warfare so that when they got to Canaan, they would be able to fight their enemies. The trial of our faith is “more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory...” (1Pet. 1:6-7; Jas. 1:2; Rom. 5:3-4).

THE WAR OF THE SEEDLINES

When God asked Eve why she had eaten from the tree, she said, “The serpent BEGUILED me and I did EAT.” Hebrew - *Nasha*, meaning ‘to seduce with a sexual appeal.’ In Aramaic, it is *exapatao*, meaning ‘to seduce wholly.’ The word *eat* among other meanings according to Strong’s Concordance is *akal* (H398) meaning “burn-up, consume, devour, lay’ or ravage.

After Satan ‘beguiled’ Eve, God promised him: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between THY SEED and HER SEED...” (Gen. 3:15). This means there are two seed-lines: the seed of the woman (Christ the Messiah) and the seed of the serpent (the anti-Christ). The final battle would be between the seeds of these two: Christ and the anti-Christ (Rev. 16:14,16).

According to the law of Genesis, every tree bears fruit according to its kind (Gen. 1:11-12). “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” and vice versa (Mat. 7:18). Consequently, if Cain was the seed of Adam and Adam is the seed of God, where did Cain learn how to kill, lie, argue, negotiate, get angry, etc.? John reveals to us that Cain was the seed of the “wicked one” – the serpent (1John 3:12). The life of everything is in its seed. “He that is born of God does not sin; he cannot sin, because his seed remains in him (1John 3:9).

Satan worked in Cain to destroy righteous Abel through whom the promised seed would come. His plan was to make sure the promise to bruise his head would not come to pass. By the time another righteous seed would be born to Eve, Satan had proliferated his own seed-line through Cain and his lieutenants who intermarried the few good seed-lines and raised hybrid offspring, giants and extremely wicked souls (Gen. 6:1-2,4). At the end of that generation, Noah was the only pure seed-line remaining on earth. God had to destroy the whole earth and raise another righteous generation after Noah. But then, Satan did not give up.

God then raised a nation through which the promised seed would come. He would defeat the seed of the serpent at the final battle (Armageddon). The anti-Christ would be bound along with his ‘father’ and thrown to their final place of abode; the lake of fire where they “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Rev. 19:19-20; 20:10). Then, Christ shall usher Israel into the promised kingdom which He preached about to Israel while on earth (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). In this Kingdom, Israel would fulfil her role as a nation of priests to other nations of the earth (Exo. 19:6). By this God would redeem the whole earth which Satan stole (Matt. 24:14).

But before all this happens, the world would pass through thousands of years segmented into Dispensation of the Ages.

The Dispensation of Ages

Please, refer to the table in the Faith walk for the dispensation of ages from Eden to the Millennium.

Every new dispensation begins at the close of the previous one. But the dispensation of Grace, also called the dispensation of the Gentiles or the Church Age began without the previous age, the Dispensation of the Law closing properly. This was so because Israel rejected the Messiah who was to close the age and usher her into the promised kingdom (Isa. 11; Mat. 27:17-26; John 19:15). But because she is a chosen people, she would be saved anyway by God's covenant because her rejection is part of God's plan (Isa.45:17; Jer. 23:6; Rom. 11:26).

At Israel's rejection of the Messiah, the age was "paused." It was time for Christ to do a quick and 'short work' in the next age, the Church Age. (Rom. 9:28). At the completion of the 'short work,' which is from Pentecost to the Rapture, Christ will deal again with Israel and this time, the remnant of Israel will receive Him. This is will happen at the time described as "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:4); the time of the 'Great Tribulation.' (Matt. 24). Christ will deliver Israel from the hands of the 'prince that shall come' – the AntiChrist. Then, the age will close. Christ will then lead Israel to The Kingdom – the millennium (Jer. 23:5). This is the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel and also to those saved during the Great Tribulation time. They will reign with Christ for one thousand years while Satan is bound in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-6).

INSTRUMENT OF THE AGE

Every dispensation or age has its own unique form and style of worship and service. However, the previous age must give way to the form and style of the new age, otherwise, the new would not be in full effect. For instance, we cannot be in the Dispensation of Grace and do the practices of the Dispensation of the Law (Rom. 6:1-2). "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." (Heb. 7:12).

The "law and the prophets" were the instrument of the Dispensation of the Law. It was given to Israel by God through Moses to keep them till the Messiah would come and lead them to the next age (Matt. 7:12; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; Rom. 3:21). "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." (Heb. 10:1). So, Israel was "under the law," and the law was her "schoolmaster," designed to lead Israel to Christ, not to the kingdom. But after that faith (Christ) is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:23-25).

The birth of John the Baptist and the Messiah were to signal the end of the Dispensation of the Law. Its forms and services also must give way for the Messiah to establish His own rule in the new dispensation (John 4:23-24). At Jesus' crucifixion, the age was of the Law officially ceased.

The Holy Spirit, the instrument for the new age arrived and the age of the gentiles officially began. God would not put a new wine in an old wine skin. But just as Israel was taken out of Egypt and Egypt was not out of them, so also they could not leave the instrument of the previous ending dispensation, to embrace the instrument of the new dispensation.

Jesus said: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." (Matt. 11:13). The old covenant lasted from Moses "till John." God sent John as a witness and a testimony to announce the end of the old and the beginning of the new (Matt. 4:5-6). He was to reveal the Messiah to Israel and prepare her for a change to the new dispensation. He came in the spirit of a prophet, but he was greater than a prophet. He was neither a prophet as per the Old Covenant standard nor an Apostle by the New Covenant standard. He was 'the voice' to midwife the new dispensation. He testified that Jesus was much greater than him and he was not even worthy to untie his shoe (Matt. 3:1; Mark 1:7). From his time onward, the kingdom suffers violence, because it's a radical departure from the old to the new. (Matt. 11:12).

If John, whom Jesus also testified that: "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist" (Luke 7:28) said he was not worthy to untie Jesus' shoe, it is logical then to conclude that the Messiah is both greater than the law and all the prophets (Matt. 12:41, 42). But the priesthood had a problem with Jesus because they did not believe He was the Messiah and couldn't accept his 'radical' teachings (Mark 1:27). To them, it violated the "law and the prophets;" the institution they had grown up with for thousands of years.

It's important to understand that the Messiah did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, which are the witness and the institution that brought Him in. He rather came to fulfill them, because He is the fulfillment of the law. (Matt. 5:17; John 5:39; Rom 3:21). But the truth is that He could not be bound by them. He constantly revealed to the Jews that He was greater than their prophets and their practices (Matt. 12:8, 41-42; Mark. 2:28) and that He is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4). Jesus said to them: "Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58-59). "Then took they up stones to cast at him." because they were blinded to see who Jesus was, but for a good and Godly purpose (Rom. 11:25).

Jesus made this truth clear to the woman at the well: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24). The "hour" officially came at Pentecost.

Another reason why Israel found it difficult to believe or receive Jesus as the Messiah was perhaps because according to their law and the prophets, the Messiah was to be a great king, ruler, mighty warrior and the 'lion of the tribe of Judah.' He was to fight, conquer, save His people and establish the Kingdom by the sword. Even the wise men attested to this. Jesus did not possess any of these qualifications. He was rather born lowly in a manger, not a warrior and

His messages were too meek for a fighter. He even said He was going to die in the hands of men and they know that Messiah would not die, but rather conquer and restore the kingdom. Even the disciples rebuked Him for saying He was going to die to save mankind (Matt. 16:21-23). The last straw was when Jesus told them that His kingdom was not of this world (Joh. 18:36). Perhaps that was the reason why Judas Iscariot helped himself, knowing that his expectation to be made a minister in the kingdom after defeating Caesar would not be realized.

Up till the present, Israel is still expecting the Messiah. They knew that Elijah must first come to announce the coming of the Messiah, but they didn't even believe that John was the Elijah. When the disciples of Jesus knew the truth about John they marveled greatly. (Matt. 17:10-13).

The disciples also knew that the Messiah should not die. But right before their eyes, He was crucified. When He finally 'died,' the disciples thought they had been truly deceived. They all counted their losses and went back to their fishing businesses (John 21:3). It was apparent that they did not grasp all the mysteries of His death and resurrection that Jesus labored to let them know while He was with them. This is because their eyes were not yet completely open to understand the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection.

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

Israel did not fully understand the dual nature of Christ as the Son of God, and also the Son of Man. He is Messiah to two distinct and separate people (Israel and the Church) and He will do a distinct and separate work for them; one by the sword and the other by the blood. They only understood the Messiah's work to save only Israel and through the sword. But the mystery of the Messiah is that He will also save the Gentiles and through His blood.

Israel is the people of God and the Messiah is her promised King. He is the branch and the Son of David, to rule on the throne of His father. He is the Lion of Judah, deliverer and ruler. His work is to lead them into the kingdom, a physical kingdom where he would rule and reign (Psa. 110:2; Isa. 11:1-4; Zech. 9:9; Jer. 23:5). He would deliver Israel by war and by the sword. He shall have a kingdom and government of peace with no end. He will establish his kingdom and reign forever with justice and judgment. (Isa 9:6-7; Zech. 9:9; Jer. 23:5-6). All these referred to the work of Christ as Messiah the King to Israel, not to the church.

But the church is the bride of Christ. The Messiah is her bridegroom, Lord and Saviour, the Lamb of God and her Redeemer. Christ would redeem the church (composed of Gentiles and Jew believers) by His vicarious death and His shed blood. This is the "mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." (Eph. 1:9). Paul said it is a great mystery (Eph. 5:32), "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." (Eph. 3:35).

Even the disciples did not understand the mystery of the church up till a little after Jesus' ascension to glory. They thought that the Messiah, who came to lead Israel to the kingdom was

murdered by evil men (Acts 2:23). They did not understand that it was the plan of God for Him to die so that He could raise the church (John 12:32).

After the resurrection, Jesus tried to let them know this truth again in various ways. On the way to Emmaus when He appeared to them, they still said to Him: "...the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. **BUT WE TRUSTED THAT IT HAD BEEN HE WHICH SHOULD HAVE REDEEMED ISRAEL...**" (Luke 24:20-21). He told them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name AMONG ALL NATIONS, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:46-48. Emphasis mine).

Their mind-set was a carry-over mentality from the age of the "law and the prophets." Part of the mystery of the new dispensation is that that the Gentiles also are partakers of the inheritance of God (Rom. 3:29; 9:24; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 3:6; 1Tim. 3:16; Col. 1:12); a truth difficult for Israel to comprehend, up till now.

The disciples did not extend the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles until several years after the church began (Acts 2:5,14). God had to 'push' the reluctant disciples like Peter out to the Gentiles. Three times Peter said, "not so Lord." The "law and the prophets" forbade him but thank God for divine leading. (Acts 10:9-17; Rom. 8:14). And when the 'other' disciples got to know that Peter went to the Gentiles, they rebuked him until he explained how God led him and how the Gentiles received salvation and were baptized. The mystery of the Messiah was revealed (Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:3-4), that He was not only the King of the Jews but also Lord and Saviour of the church.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

Because the church is the mystery of God, many Old Testament prophets including Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and others, only saw last-day events of Israel and the world, not the church. The church was hidden from them. However, Joel saw the beginning of the church (Joel 2:28-29). The prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel was specifically for Israel and Jerusalem (thy people and upon thy holy city - Dan. 9:24). "Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. 9:25-27).

The “weeks” in this prophecy is not the literal ‘week’ but is a period of seven years, making it 70 (weeks) times 7 Years. However, the 70 weeks are divided into three segments, making a total of 490years:

- The first seven weeks (49 years): The time the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem” was given. The fulfilment of this prophecy began when King Artaxerxes issued the command in 450-445 BC to rebuild Jerusalem. It was completed in forty nine years, making an historical accuracy of the first “seven weeks” of the seventy weeks. (Isa. 44:28; Jer. 29:10; Ezz. 7:12-26).
- The 62 weeks (434 years) - From the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to when “Messiah be cut off, but not for himself” (Christ’s crucifixion in AD 30) are exactly 62 weeks (434 years).
- The last week (7years): This is the period of the future (One week, equal to seven years of the Great Tribulation which will begin after a short time of the rapture of the church.

At the end of the second event of the seventy weeks, i.e. the 62nd week, (when Israel rejected the Messiah was crucified), God ‘paused’ the prophetic clock. So, out of the seventy weeks, 62 weeks (434 years) have been historically fulfilled, remaining the last week (seven years) to complete the seventy weeks (490 years).

Before the commencement of the 70th week, “the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This prophecy was also totally fulfilled in AD 70 when Rome, through its Emperor, burned the temple, destroyed Jerusalem and exiled thousands of Israelites from Jerusalem. This event of the “people of the prince,” i.e., the Roman Empire, shall be followed by the emergence of the prince himself, who will come out at the beginning of the 70th week. “He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease...” (Dan. 9:27).

THE CATCHING AWAY OF THE SAINTS

Between the fulfilled event of the people of the prince and the emergence of the prince himself, some events would happen, major among which is the church age. The church is hidden from prophecy from the prophetic eyes because it is the mystery of God to save the world. God already has a plan to save Israel. It is also called The “gap” between the end of the 69th and the beginning of the 70th week. Paul calls it a time when God does a short work (Rom. 9:28).

The “short work” is the church. It officially begins at Pentecost with the infilling and indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3) and will end in the Rapture, (the taking away of the saints - 1Thes. 4:16-17; 1Cor. 15:51-53).

Just as the church is a mystery, the rapture also is a mystery. It will happen faster than a microsecond mind can calculate. We “shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an

eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1Cor. 15:51-52). The dead in Christ shall resurrect with a glorious body and meet the Lord in the air. The saints alive who have not compromised or are not lost in apostasy, those who are members of the true church, the body of Christ will join them in the cloud for the glorious meeting with the Father (1Thes. 4:15-17).

The Holy Spirit has been poured out since Pentecost as the most important instrument of the church to prepare her for that expected event of the encounter with Jesus and the Father. His duty is to restrain the anti-Christ from coming onto the scene until the church age is finished (2Thes. 2:7). He is the seal of the saints until the time of their redemption (Eph. 4:30). At the sounds of the last trumpet, He will "quicken" the saints to meet the Lord in the air. At this time, the door of salvation through the indwelling of the life of God by the Spirit is closed (Matt. 25:10). Salvation during the period of the Great Tribulation will be works (passing through fire), no longer by Grace (the Holy Spirit) and their hope is the earthly kingdom, Millennium.

The Rapture is the blessed hope of the saints. That is why it will happen before the Great Tribulation, otherwise, passing through the wrath of God, His judgment, cannot be a "blessed hope." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Tit. 2:13-15) "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1Thes. 4:18).

The scriptures clearly teach that the Great Tribulation is a judgment for the unbelievers, not for the faithful people. Judgment of God means the wrath of God and it is prepared for those who displease God and live in disobedience to His word. Romans 1:18 and 2:2 says: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."

There is a typology in the Old Testament which shows that the saints of the church will not partake of the Great Tribulation: "Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took Him." (Gen. 5:24). "By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:15). This is a clear type of rapture of the church, as she has also the testimony pleasing God in everything.

On the other hand, Noah is a type of believers during the Great Tribulation. He was saved being under the judgment of God (flood) He was in ark, symbol of Christ.

Dear reader, this is the time to open your eyes and heart to receive the truth of God to be partaker of these divine promises. Do not be deceived by "pretty" doctrines of comfort, which

bring the people to a place of no commitment with God. Therefore, do not listen to strange gospels, but love the Father and His Son, Jesus with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. This strange gospel will gently rock the church (the ten virgins) into sleep, leading to the apostacy of the last days, the falling away (2Thes. 2:2-3).

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

Immediately after the rapture of the church, the world will slip into a time of great convulsion where the people will go to and fro without any hope. Then, the “man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” (2Thes. 2:3-4). The 70th week (7 years of tribulation) officially begins.

In the opening of the first seal, John said: “And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” (Rev 6:2). This is emergence of the anti-Christ. A harmless white horse with a bow without an arrow. His weapon is diplomacy, not war. He will come onto the scene by brokering peace with Israel, **but the peace** covenant is a ruse because “desolations are determined” (Deut. 32:26; Lev. 23:33; Luke 13:35). He will break the covenant mid-week (3^{1/2} years), stop the daily sacrifice in the new temple, declare himself as God and commit the abomination that make desolate (Dan. 9:25-27; 2Thes. 2:4). Jesus referred to this event of desolation as a landmark event and specifically instructed: “whoso readeth, let him understand.” (Mat 24:15). It’s a time when Israel shall “pass under the rod,” (Ezek. 26:34), the time of the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21).

From these, some things should be clear. The prince will not just suddenly appear on the scene to offer a peace covenant with Israel when there is no war. Such pacts are often precipitated by war. There would be a dire need for it because Israel would be at war. Right now Israel cannot be said to be at war although there are many peace pacts being brokered between her and Palestine by America but it does not appear as if it will be the peace covenant of the anti-Christ. The only reasonable concession Israel could give in that peace deal is not to be a co-nation with Palestine but to concede to the Palenstinian State. This will place many Jews in Palestine, the Biblical Judea. At the abomination of desolation, these Jews would be trapped and then the prophecy of Jesus in Matt. 24:15-21 will be fulfilled.

But the trigger to the emergence of the anti-Christ is more likely to be war in the Middle East according to Psalm 83. That prophesy where Israel’s neighbours would gang up against her with one voice in order to annihilate her as a nation is yet to come to pass and its brewing right now. It is likely that Israel would make the first move by trying to stop Iran from continuing her nuclear plant which she is building to wipe Israel off the map as she has sworn to do and also to totally obliterate “Israel, the little Satan and America, the big Satan” as she described them. They will be supported by other Arab nations mentioned in Ezek. 38:1-6.

Russia helped Iran build a nuclear reactor plant and Iran now has nuclear weapons that can reach Israel and even beyond. But when Israel rises to decimate Iran, Russia, the king of the North will be drawn like a hook to Israel, not necessarily to defend Iran but to plunder Israel and take “a great spoil.” (Eze. 38:13). This is the war of Gog and Magog, not Armageddon. It will only involve Russia and the Middle East against Israel (Ezek. 38,1), while Armageddon will involve the whole nations of the world under the control of anti-Christ, a type of Gog, chief prince (Rev. 20:8). This is after the Millennial reign (Rev. 20:7-10). Gog will be defeated.

What spoil could Russia be looking for in the mountainous Israel? In the book of Genesis 49:2,25, the Bible says in the last days, Israel will receive “blessings of the deep that lieth under.” Recently, about 15,000,000,000 cubic feet of natural gas has just been discovered in Israel with speculation for abundant oil reserve. Russia is the major supplier of natural gas to Europe and other places and she is not happy with this. She covets it and other “gold and silver” (Ezek. 38:13).

Ezekiel's prophecy shows that Russia will govern over former Soviet states at the time of the war. In other words, before this prophecy takes place, Russia will either re-conquer these territories, or they will submit to Russian rule again. In 2008, Russia invaded South Ossetia in Georgia. In 2004, Crimea overwhelmingly voted out of Ukraine to rejoin Russia and Russia annexed it. Note that Ezekiel did not call Gog a leader or king, but chief prince. This suggests that Gog might not be the leader of Russia, but another person entirely in the order of a prince. Somebody seems to fit in to that right now. The stage is getting set. The giant is rising. We will talk about the foul blood moons in part two to buttress this.

This war will most probably usher in the anti-Christ, who will ride in with a white horse to offer a brilliant peace deal in the Middle East crisis which Israel will agree to. This will be the beginning of the last week of Daniel, the seven years of Tribulation. However, Israel will be at peace in the first 3^{1/2} years of the seven year tribulation, but the world will groan under the anti-Christ, who will cause “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore *and* six.” (Rev. 13:16-18).

The church would have been raptured before this great time of trial on earth (Luke 21:35). Jesus promised her that: “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” (Rev. 3:10). Rapture can happen anytime from now. Are you ready? Are you a member of the body of Christ or a denomination? The church cannot be seen joined or founded, or headed by man. It is expressed in fellowship by those with personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Are you in that number?

To be continued at the July Edition).