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Beloved Friends and Co-Laborers in the Gospel,

A blessed Christmas to everyone of you from Southern Alabama.

We left our home in Michigan back in September. After hundreds of miles and many visits with friends and ministry in churches, we finally settled in Foley, Alabama. We are some 10 miles from the beaches of the Gulf, but are found in one of the loveliest condos it has been our pleasure to rent. We have already had the pleasure of visits from a number of Christian friends, and all brought remarkable blessings. We expect to see even more in the next few weeks. We look forward especially to the visit of our long-time English friends, Norman and Carol Gidney. They will be with us from Feb. 10 till 14. Norman will be preaching in a number of churches.

In this issue of our monthly mailing and study, we have included what is the Introduction to a new book written by Dr. James Long. I really enjoy his style of writing. In my books, one of my aims is to stretch the minds of my readers, because I find that many Christians have become the victims of the both new and old doctrinal traditions, even as I did in my early years as a Christian. I have found that sincere Bereanism is rare. Brother James Long has a gracious way of “badgering” and “stretching” the minds of his readers. I recommend his recent book: BrotherBadgerPresents@analog-rf.com.

My study this month is a continuation of last month's study. I have entitled these studies: *FINDING THE FACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST*. This month's study looks at the prophecy of Daniel's 70 Weeks. In recent years I have been surprised at the number of Christians who have adopted the preterist approach to biblical prophecy. I also find that the theory of a pretribulational coming of Christ seems to be more popular than it was fifty years ago. How is it possible that the theory of two future comings of Christ could continue to receive wider and wider acceptance when it is a novel theory originating only a century and a half ago? Admittedly, I did teach it myself, until I was led to give it the Berean test. I discovered that there is not a single Scripture anywhere in the Bible that teaches a pretribulational coming of Christ. Yes, indeed, “A lie can travel halfway around the world while truth is putting its shoes on.” How sad that such is true. Even more sad, almost incredible, that I should be defrocked, lose friends, and support over my discovery. Yet, praise God, many good things came out my discovery. Should any reader be interested, I have two books that deal more thoroughly with this issue: “*Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words*,” & “*Ahead Lies Yesterday and Tomorrow*.” Pastors may receive them free upon request.

At the moment, I am working on a new book entitled: *New Life in Christ*. The apostle Paul used the phrase “in Christ” no less than 164 times. The blessings of what it means to be in Him have blown the fuses of my mind. Will I ever finish this book? Only the Lord knows. The saints down here in Southern Alabama hear the results of my studies in my preaching and many respond with great appreciation. Pray with me as I share the riches of the blessings.

Because His,

**Henry T. Hudson
John. 3:30.**

FINDING THE FACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

by
Henry T. Hudson

What were those words from Bernard Baruch that caught my attention many years ago? They were something to the effect, "Every man has a right to his opinion, but no man has the right to be wrong in his facts." Being somewhat left brained, I cannot help but wonder about the question of interpretation? Do not the facts need interpretation? There are the revealed facts of Holy Scripture, but do they not need interpretation? Herein lies the rub. For me personally, I try to follow the simple literal "face-value" principle of interpretation. In other words, I allow accepted literary rules to prevail, while at the same time I try to eliminate the many fanciful human traditions that are always knocking at the door and which insidiously seek to infiltrate and influence textual considerations. What then are the facts with regard to the future coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

First, Jesus himself declared, "*I will come again*" (Jn. 14:3). At his ascension, the heavenly spokesmen told the disciples of Jesus: "*Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1:11). Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, wrote, "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" (Heb. 9:28). These are just a few of the many verses in the New Testament that state in unambiguous terms that Jesus Christ will come again. If there is a reader who objects and who responds, "No! These words need interpretation!" What is he implying? What on earth could he mean by such a response? Is he saying that my acceptance of this stated fact is questionable? Is he challenging the meaning of words that are as clear as the noon day sun? If a friend tells me he is leaving but he is coming back, and he would be grateful if I would take care of certain things before he returns, the only interpretation needed, if it can be called an interpretation, is to act on what he has said. The words and meaning are not subject to some mystical interpretation. Their face value meaning is very clear. However, as might be readily understood, other factors lie behind this puzzling response. It is apparently conditioned by previous biases that have been planted in the mind and which continue to influence the thinking processes on the subject.

Nevertheless, the first fact in this consideration remains valid, which is, that the doctrine of the Second Coming is clearly taught in Holy Scripture. It can be found umpteen times, and apparently was prominent in the preaching and teaching of the apostles. Curiously, most modern day pulpit preaching is focused on the First Coming of Christ, but in the early church it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that much of the preaching was on the Second Coming. Scholars such as H. A. A. Kennedy and Karl Barth have pointed out that early Christianity was "pos-sessed by an overpowering eschatological (doctrine of the last things) enthusiasm."(*The Theology of the New Testament*, p. 109).

I was a pastor for many years and was always surprised when new members would tell me that they had never heard a sermon on the Second Coming of Christ. I don't think that such is the case in Christian circles today. Where is the Christian who has not heard of "The Left Behind" series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins? Over sixty million have been published and distributed. They are novels supposedly based on

the teaching of Holy Scripture. However, here is a case where opinions and facts are at odds. For one thing, the series teach that there will be a second chance for salvation following the coming of Christ.

Factually speaking, this is a doctrine of which Scripture knows nothing. Yet, paradoxically, many evangelical Christians have embraced the prophetic teaching of these novels. More than once, in discussing biblical prophecy, I have been advised by sincere Christian people that, "If only I would read, 'The Left Behind,' I would discover the truth!" I kid you not. The conviction among many Christians is that they contain the final word on the subject. Little does the average work-a-day Christian realize that the main thesis of these books has little or no Scripture to support its main plot. The theory behind the plot was introduced into Christian thinking little more than 150 years ago. It was promoted and given respect under the influence of John Nelson Darby. Recall the words of Baruck, "Every man is entitled to his opinion, but no one has the right to be wrong about his facts."

THE FACTS

The first fact concerning the Second Coming of Christ is that it clearly revealed in Holy Scripture. Every Christian I know agrees that such is taught in the Bible. However, if I challenge the thesis of this publication sensation, almost inevitably I am sent to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. There, in the most straightforwardness of terms, it is stated that, the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of God, and that both dead and living believers will be caught up to meet him in the air and that they will forever be with him. Every chapter in both the first and second letters to the Thessalonian Christians underscores the fact that Jesus Christ will at some time in the future return. But where is the doctrine that has received such widespread acceptance? In the second chapter of Second Thessalonians, Paul wrote: "*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him . . .*" Then in unmistakable terms he stated that two things would precede Christ's coming. In the fifth chapter of the first epistle he spoke of the future coming of the Lord Jesus as being like the coming of a thief in the night. The context makes it clear that this aspect of his coming refers to unbelievers who are totally unimpressed by the fact that Jesus is coming again. The image of Christ coming as a thief can be found in a number of references (Mat.24:43, 44; Lk. 12:39; 21:34-36; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 16:15).

But let it be emphasized that the "unexpectedness" is with reference to those unprepared for his coming. The parable of "The Ten Virgins" in Matthew 25 focuses on this same fact. Five were wise and five were foolish (Cf. Mat. 25:1-13). Five were prepared and five were not. Also, let it be noted that there was no second chance for those unprepared. Sudden destruction falls upon them, "*And they shall not escape.*" (Cf. 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:3; 2 Thess, 1:5-10). As for believers, "*God hath not appointed*" them "*to wrath, but to obtain salvation, by our Lord Jesus Christ.*" This salvation will be brought about by their being caught up to meet the Lord in the air and then it continues with the fulfillment of the promise that they would be forever with him. These are the stated facts. Jesus Christ will return. It will mean salvation for those who are ready, and destruction for those who are not.

Another passage that sooner or later comes to the forefront in any discussion of the predicted return of the Lord Jesus Christ is what has been called "The Olivet Discourse." It is found in the Gospels. There one can find a panorama of the main events

that will take place before Christ returns.

One thing that is repeated in the discourse is the fact that in the future there will be many false teachers and consequent widespread deception. Such being the case, a distortion of the facts can be anticipated. The disciples had asked the Lord Jesus when would the temple be destroyed, and what would be the sign of his coming even of the end (the *sunteleia*, consummation) of the age (Mat. 24:3)? His first words were: “*Take heed that no man deceive you.*” (Mat. 24:4). In what followed, the Lord listed a series of time-consuming events, one of which was a particular prediction that had been made by Daniel in the Old Testament. It focused on what might be called the “epitome of apostasy,” and also on great tribulation directed mainly against believers. So severe is the persecution that, “*except those days should be shortened (cut short) there should be no flesh saved.*” (Mat. 24:9, 22. Cf. also Dan. 7:21, 22; Mk. 13:13, 20; Lk. 21:11-19). There was clearly a time limit on this apostasy and persecution. Earlier in this discourse the Lord had said, “*But he that shall endure to the end (i.e. the end of the age, thus the end of this time of tribulation) the same shall be saved.*” (Mat. 24:13). However, amazingly, before the end of the age, yea, even in spite of the tribulation, the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world (Mat. 24:14). Then, stated clearly, the Lord Jesus declared that after this tribulation, he would return “*in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*” There would be the great sound of a trumpet and there would be the gathering of all believers from one end of heaven to the other (Mat. 24:27-31)

With regard to this gathering, the Lord spoke of how two would be in the field and one would be taken and the other left; how two would be grinding at the mill and one would be taken and the other left (Mat. 24:40, 41). What is noteworthy here is that the word “taken” is a translation of the Greek word *paralambano*. The word carries the thought of being 'taken or received alongside of.' (Cf. what was noted in Jn. 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2:1. Cf. Also LXX Jer. 32:7; 49:1, 2; Dan. 5:31; 7:18). In the parables of Matthew 13, there is an emphasis upon wheat and tares and upon there being a separation between them at the end (*sunteleia*) of the age. In all these passages there is no indication of anyone getting a second chance of salvation after the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If I were to look at one other reference, it would be what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. In this passage Paul declared that at the sounding of the last trumpet believers would be raised from the dead. He went on to say that when this happens, the prophecy of Isaiah 25:8 would be fulfilled. The context, both of this passage in Paul, and in Isaiah, are connected with the coming of the kingdom of God. The broader context of Isaiah is concerned with the day of the Lord in which the Lord alone will be exalted (Isa. 2:12, 17). It will be a day of judgment for some and a day of salvation for others. Not only will the resurrection of the saints of God take place at that time, but they will also enter into their inheritance in the kingdom of God. The words of Isaiah harmonize with what has been noted thus far. Not only will that day be characterized by the sounding of a great trumpet, but it will be, as already mentioned, a day of separation between the saints of God, and those who are destined for punishment.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity” Isaiah 26:20,21

FILTERING THE FACTS

One of the most important conclusions from the preceding facts is that Scripture does not teach a second chance following the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, there are second chances here and now, and even third chances before his coming, but not after his coming. In fact, as Paul wrote in Hebrews 2:3, “*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation . . .*” The answer is that it is impossible. As was noted in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 for those not ready and prepared for his coming, “*they shall not escape.*” And as was also noted, when he does come again there will be a division. On the one side those who go into everlasting punishment and on the other side those who go into everlasting life (Mat. 25:46; Jn. 3:36). Opinions are one thing, but facts are something else. Is it not much wiser to stand with the facts?

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FINDING THE FACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (2)

by

Henry T. Hudson

How does it happen that facts become distorted? How does it happen that, “A lie can travel halfway around the world while truth is still putting on its shoes?” The answer lies in a combination of possibilities: perspective, wishful thinking, traditions, cultural considerations, deductions from faulty premises, blind loyalties, and a misplacing of confidence in supposed authorities, to name but a few. Is perspective really reality? Does my wanting something to be true make it true? Is my country always in the right? Because I have been taught the same thing as my parents is it necessarily right? Does the mere consistency in the process of logic mean that my deductions must be true? Does my loyalty to a cause determine its worthiness? Does my acknowledgment of a respected authority guarantee that I am standing in the truth? These are all disturbing questions.

In the present series of essays, I am exploring the subject of distortion with regard to what the Bible actually teaches about the future coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? If, as the Bible teaches, there will be many false teachers abroad at the end of the age, would it not be wise to weigh carefully what is being taught? We need to leave no stone unturned in seeking to be sure that what is received is a true reflection of what is taught in the Bible.

DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

One passage that might be examined to illustrate how distortion can creep into the interpretation of Holy Scripture is Daniel 9:24-27. With regard to this passage, Alva J. McLain wrote: “Probably no single prophetic utterance is more crucial in fields of Biblical Interpretation, Apologetics, and Eschatology.” (*Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*, p. 9). Without controversy (yet producing endless pages of controversy), it is one of the most amazing and most popular prophecies in Holy Scripture. It is an excellent passage to test the principle that was set forth in the first study. Is it really possible to follow the literal face-value rule of interpretation when seeking to understand Daniel 9:24-27? If not, why not? I remember Robert Van Kampen, a man of God who made it his solemn duty to follow the face value principle of interpreting Scripture, telling me:

“Get the interpretation of this passage straight and you are more than halfway toward being on the right track in understanding the events that precede the coming of Christ!” It would be wise to quote the reference in its entirety.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto 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.

Can the face-value principle operate with these verses? Why not? They begin with the statement that 70 x 7 are determined, or divided upon Israel and Jerusalem. The Hebrew for seven is the word *shabua* and it means seven. The LXX translates with the word years. Genesis 29:27 illustrates how the seven can indeed be speaking of years. The whole period is divided into three separate periods, 7+62+1 adding up to a total of 490 years. The whole period will end with the realization of six things. The force of the particle “to” has the significance, “for the purpose of.” These six things may be divided into two parts: The first part deals with Israel's apostasy, sin, and reconciliation. The second has reference to bringing in righteousness, verification of prophecy, and the anointing of a new sanctuary. From the perspective of Israel being in captivity, the prospects were blessed indeed. Daniel had earlier predicted the future coming of God's kingdom (Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 22). Then the time limits are broken down into 7X7 and 62X7 (total of 483 years). And finally a period of 1X7 (7 years). The first 69X7 (483 years) extend from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah.

Those 483 years from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem till Messiah being cut off are not distorting the text. The words are clear. However, the question arises: Was it the decree of Cyrus (536 B. C.), or that of Darius (519 B. C.) or that of Artaxerxes (445 B. C.)? Since the text does not give the date, it is wise to desist from being dogmatic. Sir Robert Anderson, in his book, *The Coming Prince* argues for Artaxerxes. He amazingly works out the exactness of the prophecy from the 14th of March, 445 B.C., till the 6th of April 32 A. D. Working on the basis of the length of biblical years (360 days), 69x7x360 ends up being 173,880 days. This, according to Anderson, brings the fulfillment to the very day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a colt and was publicly proclaimed as the Messiah of God by the disciples and the crowds gathered there (Lk. 19:38; Zech. 9:9). Hence, the decree of Artaxerxes seems to be the most likely date (Neh. 1:1-11; 2:1-8).

The next detail in the prophecy declares that after the 62 X 7 of years (the first 7 being connected with the rebuilding of the city), the Messiah would be cut off, “*but not for himself.*” Then, at sometime following the Messiah being cut off, another prince

appears and his people destroy the city (apparently, Jerusalem) and the sanctuary. This is followed by the statement that reads, “*unto the end wars and desolations are determined.*” The final prediction in the prophecy concerns the last and seventieth week (7 years) which is divided into two periods. The way it reads, the pronoun “he” would go back to what was stated with regard to the prince that would destroy the city and the sanctuary. He will “*confirm the covenant with many for one week (7 year period); 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. 9:27).

In this connection, light might be shed on the subject if a comparison be made with what is recorded in Daniel 7:21-27. In the days immediately prior to the establishment of God's kingdom upon the earth, there will be a world ruler who will persecute the saints of God, and his reign shall last three and a half years. The first part of the prophecy sets the goal as far as the establishment of God's kingdom is concerned. This last part lets the reader know what will happen in the days immediately prior to this establishment. Depending on the authority of Hebrew scholarship, the latter part of the verse could be rendered: “. . . *and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that makes desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolator.*” (Dan. 9:27).

Let the reader research the various experts on this prophecy and he will discover that there are basically two main views. The one sees the whole prophecy, including the seventieth week as already having been fulfilled. The other is that the seventieth week yet remains to see final fulfillment. As to the former, even the six climactic points of verse 24 were supposedly realized with the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In some way, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in 70 A. D. was also included in the 70 weeks. If the death of Christ is the terminal point of the prophecy, then this view requires a gap of some thirty plus years.

Reviewing the facts, it seems to be clear, at least to me, that the prophecy has a direct connection with Jerusalem and the Jews. But I can't see how there was a finishing of transgression; or an ending of Israel's sins, or how reconciliation and restoration became a reality, and everlasting righteousness was established. From what I read in Romans 11:25-27 such is yet future. In what sense was prophecy sealed and the Most Holy Place anointed? But then, would this not necessitate a gap between the three divisions of the prophecy? Gaps are not unusual in prophetic chronology (Cf. 1 Pet. 1:10, 11). If 70 A.D. be the destruction predicted here, then there is quite a gap. Did Christ confirm a covenant for one week? Or is this some other prince? Christ did establish a new covenant, but it is forever, not for one week. Did Christ cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease? Such did not cease till 70 A.D. with the destruction of the Temple. However, there will be a personage who will interfere with Temple worship in the most apostate of manners, and for a limited time (Dan. 7:21-27; 2 Thess. 2:1-12).

The Lord Jesus Christ, in his Olivet discourse, made reference to this prophecy of Daniel. He was explaining to his disciples the things that would come to pass before his second coming. There is a considerable list, all of which involve time consuming events. There is one event, which has already been noted in Daniel, an event that when it happens would precipitate a time of unparalleled tribulation. In the Greek, it is designated as being “the great one.” (Mat. 24:15-22; Rev.7:14). It is a period, limited in duration, lasting half a week (three and a half years, forty two months, a time plus two and a half,

and 1060 days. Cf. Dan. 7: 25; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5). The main point here is that this earth-shaking event that the Lord was describing is an event that would take place in the middle of the 70th week. And, as is clear in his discourse in Matthew 24, it was yet in the future, which would obviously be some time after his death on the cross. Also, if the late date for the writing of the Revelation be correct, it would be more than a score of years following 70 A.D. Moreover, as Matthew states clearly, the coming of Christ with power and great glory will take place after the great tribulation (Mat. 24:29, 30). Such being the case, how would I account for the long gap between the 69th and 70th weeks? As was just stated, it could be accounted for by one of the frequent prophetic gaps found in biblical prophecy, and also by the fact that a new unprophecied dispensation had been introduced which would require time in allowing for the longsuffering of God to be extended. This new dispensation was at the heart of Paul's distinctive ministry to Gentiles (Eph. 3:1-10; 2 Pet. 3:8-16). God's time clock is not the same as ours, and even a thousand years can be reckoned as but one day, and one day as a thousand years. But, the day of the Lord will come and he alone will be exalted, and these six predictions that climax the 70 weeks will be realized (Isa. 2:12, 17; Dan. 9:24). Those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are ready for that day, for they are not appointed to wrath, *“but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1 Thess. 5:1-10).

A THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE END TIMES

by

Dr. James Long

INTRODUCTION

Over the last five decades, I have heard and read the most preposterous rot presented by laypeople and theologians, all purporting to get their information from the Bible. Some of the worst cases are in the area of prophecy. One of my pastor friends calls much of this output "wishful drivel." I have wondered where all of the Bereans have gone. They are praised in Acts 17:11 for not believing things based on authority, even from an apostle, but searching Scripture for confirmation.

This book is a follow-on of my first book, *When All Else Fails, Read the Directions, Or, How to Study the Bible*. In this prophecy book the reader can, as it were, "look over my shoulder" and see how I apply the analytical methods described in that book. You will find many cases of my underlining portions of verses to indicate their importance. The reader is encouraged to use these methods to expand on what I have written for their own practice and benefit. Read large chunks of Scripture around the passages I present. Look up the definitions of original language words using Strong's numbers (to be described later). Consult the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* for cross references. Use a concordance and Nave's *Topical Bible* to find other passages that contain the key words and concepts.

One common erroneous study method is to search for isolated verses that can be taken out of context to justify the practices and beliefs of your group, and is frequently done by cults. This reminds me of an experience of my late father. He made several trips to North Africa between 1955 and 1965. In the early ones, he saw street vendors praising the virtues of their patent medicines. Around 1960 the process of color printing on transparent plastic sheets was perfected. You could turn the pages and see into different levels inside the human body. In the later ones, my father saw the street vendors pointing to such diagrams in order to make their patent medicine claims more believable.

You should examine every passage on a subject to determine what God wants your belief and practice to be. Independent, critical thought is a rare, valuable commodity these days. I hope that this book motivates many readers to acquire it. Do not make anyone your error-free fearless leader. Feel free to disagree with anything I present as long as it is from your independent study, using the methods shown in the first two chapters of this book, and not from things that you have been told and uncritically accepted.

The approach of this book is, after some preliminaries, to go through the Bible cover to cover, much like a commentary, and examine end times prophecy as it comes. This is not the usual way used by most books on this subject of presenting by topic while picking and choosing passages, some out of context, and ignoring conflicting passages.

In order to keep this book short, only the most important prophecies are covered. The reader is encouraged to read the whole Bible, cover to cover, to find the remaining ones. A One Year Bible is a convenient way to do this. Keep a pencil and paper handy to write down your observations for detailed study later in the day.

The earliest documented eschatological theory I can find is mentioned on page 12 of *Late Antiquity, a history of the Mediterranean area (circa A.D. 1-650)* published by Harvard University Press. It was that the second coming, resurrection, and translation to heaven would occur after the end of the Great Tribulation. The discussion of Mark 13:20-27 in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, published in 1962 and associated with the Moody Bible Institute, agrees. Appendix 2 lists other books and statements by pastors and theologians over the centuries that had similar views. There is some variation in the time between the end of the Great Tribulation and the resurrection amongst different flavors of this general belief, but all agree that the then living believers will be kept safe during this short interval.

BACKGROUND

God has inspired the writing of the Bible to give us information. This includes not only how we are to relate to God but also what we are to believe about Him and how we are to live our lives. It was written to ordinary people then and is understandable by ordinary people now. Scattered throughout Scripture are passages and significant parts of some books about the future relative to the time they were written. Many of these have come true. The remainder will come true in our future. It is the latter that we cover here. Far too many people try to force these predictions onto past or present situations. My belief is that the match will be exact—no imagination, spiritualization, cryptography, or symbolism will be needed. You will notice many places in this book where I say that there is presently insufficient data to form a conclusion. In other places, I present a tentative hypothesis of others or mine. Additional information will appear, as we get closer to the prophesied events.

It is not the purpose of prophecy to make for entertaining reading of spooky stories on a stormy evening. I recommend *Twilight Zone* and *Night Gallery*, two of my favorite television programs, for people looking for this experience. One purpose is to act as warnings about the consequences of disobeying God. Another is to be an authenticator so that when they come true, people's trust in God is increased. The best authenticators are not guessable ahead of time and so cannot be faked. It is a waste of time to try to figure them out before they occur; especially very obscure ones such as the broken horn in Daniel.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:12 that we now look into a mirror dimly. Back then, these were polished sheets of copper. In many cases, the Bible does not present detailed information in the prophecies. He also said that we now know in part but we will know all when Jesus comes again. Those on the spot will have more information from what they see and experience and the prophecy will make perfect sense without any need for speculation. As Mark Twain said, "It is very hard to make precise predictions, especially about the future."

In this book, I use the general term "God" for members of the Trinity, individually and in different combinations. Many people have trouble with the Trinity being God. This is caused by starting with the wrong definition of God as a single individual. One thing that might help is to think of the Supreme Court. We make statements such as, "The Supreme

Court decided such and so." This even though the court has several justices and they made the decision. God is the collective term for members of the Trinity just as Supreme Court is for the justices. One way to visualize Jesus being both human and God is to look inside ourselves. We have a physical body as well as a spiritual soul. When we die the soul survives. This is the basis for "gave up the ghost" being another term for physical death. The spiritual soul of Jesus was God and not a created one.

Many people dismiss things they cannot understand or visualize. In order to counteract this, I use the term "God the Holy Spirit" in order to emphasize that He is just as much God as Jesus even though hard to visualize and is the only member of the Trinity against which there is an unforgivable sin (Matthew 12:31-32). Our bodies are the dwelling place of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). He influences us if we are sensitive to His leading. He was involved in creation (Genesis 1:2) and the fertilization of Mary to produce the body of Jesus (Matthew 1:18-20).

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