***The Age of the Jews, No. 7

DS6A***

We have divided the dispensations for our thinking into four major segments. The basis of that separation is who runs the dispensation. For each dispensation, there is a steward--somebody who is responsible for God's order. A dispensation is how God looks at things or how God looks at history. A dispensation is how God arranges His household. We may look upon this world as God's house.

So the first dispensation was a dispensation in which the gentiles were in charge. The second dispensation which we are now looking at is that in which the Jews are in charge. The first phase of that dispensation was a period of promise in which patriarchs ruled the nation. Then things changed, and a new system of government was set up for phase two of the dispensation of the Jews in which the law predominated and controlled the Jewish people. This brought us to the point of the cross.

The dispensation of the Jews has a third phase which is the phase of the tribulation which comes after the dispensation of the church, during which period Christians are God's stewards here on earth. Then after the church age, in which the rapture has taken place to terminate that age and Christians are taken to heaven, God again begins dealing with the Jewish people. We take phase three of the dispensation of the Jews which is the tribulation phase. This is the one we are going to look at in this session. It is a phase of seven years minus a short period. The last dispensation is the kingdom dispensation which begins with the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation period when He returns with his angelic and human armies.

We found that God had based his dealings with his earthly people Israel upon the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant was amplified in three covenants which we have now looked at in detail. The Palestinian Covenant amplified the promise about a land; the Davidic Covenant amplified the promise of a seed; and, the New Covenant amplified the promise of blessing--blessing in the form of salvation. Let me summarize this New Covenant for you with certain points that come out concerning the New Covenant which is crucial to the fulfillment of the Jewish dispensation--the completion of the promises made to Abraham.

**Summary of the New Covenant**

1. **Unconditional**

The New Covenant is unconditional. It's a grace covenant, and it is resting on the "I will" of God. This is frequently used in Jeremiah 31:31-34. You may compare Ezekiel 16:60-62. The Covenant depends upon what God says He will do.

1. **Everlasting**

The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant. This is closely related to the fact that it is unconditional. It's made in grace (Isaiah 61:2). Compare Ezekiel 37:26 and Jeremiah 31:35-through 37. It's an everlasting covenant.

1. **Regeneration**

The New Covenant also promises the importation of a renewed mind which we may call regeneration (Jeremiah 31:33). Compare Isaiah 59:21.

1. **Favor**

The New Covenant provides for restoration to the favor and blessing of God (Hosea 2:19-20). Compare Isaiah 61:9. It is the New Covenant that is going to take all the unbelieving Jews you know today and restore them to God's favor and to God's blessing.

1. **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness of sin is also included in the New Covenant. "For I will remove their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more," is what it says (Jeremiah 31:34).

1. **The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit**

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is also included. You may see this by comparing Jeremiah 31:33 with Ezekiel 36:27.

1. **Obedient**

The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit will be manifested and the will of God will be known by obedient hearts (Jeremiah 31:34).

1. **Material Blessings**

As is always the case when Israel is in the land, she will be blessed materially in accordance with the provisions of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 32:41, Isaiah 61:8, Ezekiel 34:25-27).

1. **The Sanctuary**

The sanctuary will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. "For it is written, 'I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever more. My tabernacle also shall be with Me'" (Ezekiel 37:26-27). That's why we are interested in seeing what the present Israeli government may do in the direction of the beginning of the rebuilding of the temple. For it shall first be rebuilt in unbelief also.

1. **Peace**

War shall cease and peace shall reign according to Hosea 2:18. The fact that this is also a definite characteristic of the millennium (Isaiah 2:4) further supports the fact that the New Covenant is millennial in its fulfillment.

1. **The Blood of Jesus Christ**

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the New Covenant. For it says, "By the blood of your covenant I have set forth your prisoners out of the pit where there's no water (Zachariah 9:11).

As of this point right now in history, these covenants have not been fulfilled. God has made unconditional promises. He will not go back on His Word. It does not depend on anything that the Jews may do for their fulfillment, but they have not yet been fulfilled.

God's household arrangement under the law system is the one that most people know about. Most churches today have a great deal of the dispensation of the law carried over into the age of the church which is operated on a totally different way of life. The Jews operated on a law way of life. It was getting God's blessing through works which you performed. Whereas the church operates on the grace way of life which is God giving us blessings apart from anything that we do. He is eager to pour out to us blessing, and to fill our cup to overflowing simply on the basis of our advancement in the knowledge of the Word, and our maintaining our status of fellowship with the Lord.

Well, the Jews failed in their dispensation as stewards. Instead of welcoming their King, who came to fulfill all the covenants, they crucified Him. When they did that, God's dealings with them came to an end. So the final third period is the one which brings to an end this dispensation. This is immediately in the future. This is called the period of tribulation because it is the period of the greatest trial for humanity; and, the time of the greatest agony for human beings on the face of the earth that has ever existed. This is the time when an angry God pulls out all the stops, and particularly when God's thunder and lightning strikes against the Jewish people as they have never been hit before.

The beginning of this period has been delayed by almost 2,000 years for the period of the church age. However, as we think of God's dispensations as the arrangement of His household, we can hear the furniture being moved around, and we can see the indications already before us that God is setting things up for the period of the tribulation. The dispensation of the church in which we live today is a totally new dispensation. It has no relationship to the one of the Jews. It has nothing from the age of the law that we are to carry over into the age of the church. When you do that, you end up with religion.

**The Tribulation**

We're going to look at specific information now about this tribulation--phase three of the dispensation of the Jews. The reason for this period is that God is preparing his people, the earthly people of Israel, to realize their covenant promises. It is literally to be a hell both for gentiles and Jews. We have this described for us in Matthew 24:21-22. It will be a time of intense suffering, but Christians will not be on earth during this period. I hope you got that. Christians will not be on earth during the period of the tribulation. We're not going to go into that in detail tonight. If you want to pursue that factor, you can get the recordings on prophecy that go into that in more detail. However, I just want to point out to you the key verse that declares to us that Christians will not go through the tribulation.

The reason I am stressing this is that there are some Bible teachers who tell Christians that some Christians will go halfway through the tribulation. That's called the mid-tribulation rapture concept--through the first three-and-a-half years. Some Bible teachers say Christians will go all the way through the tribulation, and then the Lord will return. That is called the post-tribulation rapture. The Bible does not teach either a mid-tribulation or a post-tribulation rapture. It teaches very clearly a pre-tribulation rapture; that is, that Christians are taken out of this world before the time of Israel's greatest trial begins.

In Revelation 3:10, we have this spelled out in the last part of the verse. The verse says, "Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of tribulation. This is speaking to the Philadelphia church which is the church which represents symbolically the church of the age of grace. "Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of (not temptation, as your translation may have, but) tribulation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." The expression "them that dwell upon the earth" in the book of the Revelation is a technical expression which always refers to unbelievers. This verse clearly declares to us that the point of the tribulation is to give hell on earth to unbelievers. It has not been designed to give hell on earth (or any place else) to believers. That is something that God has not designed for believers.

As I hope you learned in the previous session, God is never honored when we experience any kind of suffering that is not taken in stride and in joy. He has come to make us happy, and every word recorded in the Bible is designed to make you happy. When you are unhappy, that is not to the credit of God who is our host. So the Christians do not go through this period. The purpose here is to prepare the nation Israel for her Messiah, and to pour judgment upon unbelieving men and unbelieving nations.

God has given us a divine timetable from which we work in making these decisions. Here again, we're skimming. We're giving you an overview of what God is arranging in His household for this particular period. So we're not going to go into the details. The dispensation of the Jews was interrupted on the day of Pentecost. God the Holy Spirit, who is omnipresent, came to reside on the earth in person within every believer. When He did that, the church body was formed, and the church began. The church began on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the events of the cross (Acts 2:1-4). When the dispensation of the Jews terminated, it also completed 483 years of Jewish history out of a total of 490 years which God had revealed to the prophet Daniel that God still had outlined for the Jewish people.

Daniel wanted to know, "Lord, how long before it's all over for my people? How long before we have entered eternal blessing?" The Lord gave him the answer in the form of a timetable. Well, historically, as we figure up the years, 483 years click by on the prophetic clock just disorderly as can be. We came down to the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ. The Messiah, to use Daniel's terms, at that point, was cut off. In other words, Christ came and said, "Here I am, King of the Jews, ready to fulfill the covenant; ready to establish Jerusalem as the headquarters of the world; and, ready to establish My kingdom on this earth." They said, "We don't want you for our king," and the Roman government was induced to crucify him.

So as of this point, when the Messiah was cut off, there remain seven years of unfulfilled history of the Jewish people. This seven-year period is what fits in here to the tribulation period. You will find this confirmed in many passages in the book of the Revelation--sometimes in days, and sometimes in months--but they all add up to seven years. We get this from Daniel 9:24-26 where we have this timetable laid out. Daniel speaks about 70 weeks. These 70 weeks, I think you understand, are 70 periods of seven years each. That's how we get the 490 years. The counting begins, the Lord says, from the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. So the Jews forfeited their stewardship (their leadership) on this earth, and God appointed Christians in the church age to now be His stewards in charge of a new dispensation (Matthew 21:41, 43).

**The Rapture**

So here is the world scene at the time that this dispensation of the Jews closes with its tribulation phase. It is to be indeed quite a drama. It is to be presented in two acts. When you look at the tribulation period, you must think of it in terms of two divisions. Each of these will be three-and-a-half years in extent. It begins with the church being raptured and taken away. The rapture is the moment the church leaves this earth. This includes all believers of this age--those who are living, and those who are dead. The minute they are taken out, the prophetic clock starts ticking, and the last seven years now begin ticking away. The signal for the curtain to rise, therefore, on this tribulation drama is the rapture (2 Thessalonians 4:16-17). You will find that the name of this drama is the hour of temptation or the hour of tribulation which we read about in Revelation 3:10. There is a great political setting at the time that the curtain rises on the tribulation scene. This is part of the furniture that we're talking about that we see moving about.

**The Political Scene**

First of all, remember that any time the bible talks about directions, it speaks of that in terms of the city of Jerusalem. The book of Daniel describes to us four power blocs which will exist as the curtain rises on the tribulation drama. One is going to be the king of the North. This is naturally north in reference to the city of Jerusalem and the country of Palestine. Daniel 11:40 tells us about the king of the North. Then there is to be a king of the West, relative again to Palestine and the City of Jerusalem (Daniel 7:7, 23, 24). Then there is to be another block which is spoken of as being led by the king of the South (Daniel 11:40). Then there is another bloc spoken of as being led by the king of the East (Revelation 16:12).

These descriptions refer to national groups usually led by one particular nation who, in the end times, will form power blocs in this world. The Western bloc is going to be the Western European nations. It will surround the Mediterranean Sea and be on the site of the old Roman Empire. It will be led by the first beast of Revelation 13, usually referred to as the antichrist. The North, as you look at a map relative to Palestine, naturally runs into Russia. It is quite obvious (everything fits together) that Russia constitutes the power bloc of the North. The South is led by Egypt, and the Afro-Arab nations constitute the bloc of the South (the southern power). Then the East is, of course, the Asiatic bloc from the Asiatic nations--China and Japan and other nations which join in to form a fourth power bloc.

All of these power blocs in the world when the tribulation begins have one main goal, and that is world peace. Somehow, their goal is world peace. They're all going to seek world peace, but with a stinger--that they have world peace with their bloc as dominant in the process. They want to be king of the hill of this world of peace. Of course, it is very fascinating, for example, to view the communist world today. The communists say that people have wars because of your economic system under which you live. They say that capitalism breeds wars. They say that socialism and communism enables people to live in peace. Well, the dirtiest word in the communist world is "imperialist." That means that you are a powerful nation who is taking the resources from poor people; making slaves of them; and, taking their resources for your own benefit.

China has just come out with another word for Russia. China called Russia "imperialist." You may say, "Well, she's right. There never was an imperialist nation like Russia. There never was such a nation on the face of the earth that dominated other nations." Obviously, we remember what happened in Hungary when the Hungarians got the breath of freedom that the Chileans have received, and understand what they almost lost. When Czechoslovakia got the breath of freedom for a while before the Russian tanks came rolling in, they realized what they had lost in freedom.

Russia is an imperialist power. However, the part that you have to remember is that any time one communist country points at another country and says, "You are an imperialist," they have to go back to Lenin's book of doctrine. Lenin's book of doctrine says that anytime you have established that a country on the face of the earth (a certain state) is an imperialist state, you are now obliged to destroy that country. If you establish that a country is an imperialist country, you are obliged for the preservation of communism and paradise for the workers to destroy that country. So this was absolutely fantastic for China to come and say, "Russia is the greatest imperialist country on the face of the earth today."

This makes us feel bad because usually the United States is number one, and here we become second in that too. It's like we have become second in about everything else relative to the communist world. So the thing that's interesting about this, relative to prophecy, is that all these four power blocs seeking peace are going to come together in the Middle East for the last final World War as part of the arrangement of this dispensation or phase of God's arrangement. They're going to go for each other's throats. They're going to grab for the jugular vein in one desperate attempt to bring world peace on their terms. Behind it all, they will not realize, is Satan who through demon powers has brought them into the Middle East, and who is egging them on to this combat because as of this point, which will be past the middle of the tribulation, Satan will have been cast out of heaven. He will know that it's all over for him, and then he will turn in vengeance.

This is like Hitler did after he realized that it was all over, especially once the Americans were able to get a maximum of armament and soldiers across the Rhine River on the Remagen Bridge which was blown up but did not fall until a few days later. By that time the Allies were across. When Hitler saw that, he knew that it was all over. However, he determined that as he went down, it was going to be a great Wagnerian festival. Like Wagner's great operas, he was going to bring it all down in flames with him. That's exactly what Satan is going to do. Satan gave the idea to Hitler in the first place. The devil is going to try to bring it all down in flames with him. That's why those nations in these power blocks are going to be in the Middle East. Obviously, they're all maneuvering for it. They're all getting in position because they all want to control the vast wealth of the Middle East, and they want to bring a world of peace so they can use this wealth on their terms.

That's the political setting. The spiritual setting will be that when the rapture takes place, every believer will be removed. At the point of the rapture, every believer is gone from the face of the earth. Everybody who is left is an unbeliever. With the church gone, the Holy Spirit no longer is present in residence on the earth. He is omnipresent as deity, but He is no longer present in residence. The believers are gone; He indwells the believers; and, He leaves with them. When He leaves, all restraint upon evil is let loose. Evil is turned loose to express itself in its fantastic maximum degree. People all over the face of this earth will be demon possessed. They will be expressing everything that demonism can express in its maximum ultimate degree. There will be no restraints upon evil whatsoever (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

**The 144,000**

Immediately, however, after the church is gone, God in some way will raise up 144,000 Jewish men who will receive Christ as Savior, and become the base core of evangelists for all the planet earth. 12,000 of these will come from each tribe except the tribe of Dan (Revelation 7:3-8). These 144,000 will have their lives protected. They will not be able to be killed. Many--multitudes, probably--will listen to the gospel that they preach; they will believe it; and, and they will be saved right here in the earth's darkest hours. This is a period in which the Holy Spirit will be bringing conviction, and people will be believing. However, while the evangelists are protected, the converts are not. Many many of them will be martyrs. They will be persecuted in any respect, but that does not mean that there will not be religion on the earth. While Christianity and its converts are persecuted, the churches are going to be packed because religion is going to be flourishing.

**The Antichrist**

The characters who are involved in this drama include, of course, God the Father, who's in direction of the whole thing. There are elect and fallen angels who carry out various roles. There are various human personalities--believers and unbelievers. Here's the plot: The 144,000 believers come on the scene. Many are saved all over the world as a result of this. The man of the hour in all of this drama is going to be the king of the West. He will become the prime personality. He will be in charge of ten nations which come together. These ten nations will be made up of nations in Western Europe. As you know, Western Europe is now moving together. There is a common market which now has nine nations in it. Its goal is to bring together a union of ten nations. This may be the forerunner of what we are reading here in Scripture.

This man has a pact with Satan for power over the nations (Revelation 13:7). Satan, in return for the power that he gives this man, demands worship. Satan, of course, does this today. There are people all over the world who are in power because of Satan. They have a pact with the devil. This is a very real thing. Obviously, Satan is a creature. He can only be here; he can be there; he can be in that room; or, he can be in this room, but he cannot be everywhere at once. Therefore he has millions and millions of demons through whom he works. However, ultimately, he has to operate through human beings.

Therefore, all over this world, there is an echelon of human beings--a lot of peons and a lot of small-time bananas--who, one way or another, work under demon influence. Then there is a higher plateau of fewer people who have a greater contact and understanding of the workings of demonism. Then there is a third level in which there are fewer people, but those who now actually have demons placed at their disposal whom they may command and whom they may use. Finally, there is a fourth and even a fifth level, and maybe more. However, each level has fewer and fewer people at the top who are in charge of vast demonic power. All over the world, there are people, many of them probably whom you and I know as world personalities, who have been placed in those positions by Satan himself, and through whom he is now controlling the world and seeking to move it to fulfill his plans.

**The False Prophet**

All of these people have this power with the accompanying wealth and prestige that it brings on the basis that they worship Satan. That's what this man of sin is going to do here who rules the Western bloc of nations. The Western world is going to idolize this character. He will rule these nations with an iron fist, but they're going to love him. Why? Because he will bring them peace and a semblance of prosperity. He will be accompanied by a man who apparently will operate primarily out of Palestine--the False Prophet. He will accept the king of the West, and he will lead the Jews into accepting the king of the West as their protector. Many converts at this point, when they see the king of the West coming on as their protector, will flee as they have been told in Matthew 24:16, from Judea to the mountains. Many Jews will flee on the basis of the fact that they know this Scripture.

Well, at the end of the first three-and-a-half years, everything has gone along pretty well. The four power blocs have been in operation. We come to the end of the first three-and-a-half years. As of this point, the Russian power bloc is destroyed. It makes an aggressive move, and God supernaturally brings, the Bible says, fire from heaven. This is certainly descriptive of nuclear weapons. In any case, by a supernatural act of God, the power of Russia is broken. When she is off the scene, there is a vacuum. That's when the man of sin, the Western ruler, moves into that vacuum. From the middle of the tribulation, God arranges in His household that this man now becomes the dictator of all the world. Up to this point, he has only controlled ten nations. Now he is supreme ruler of all the world.

There is an Eastern power bloc that grits its teeth; and there is a southern power bloc that grinds its teeth against him, but they don't dare attack him. The Northern bloc is incapacitated as of this point. It comes to some revival over the period of three-and-a-half years so that it's on the scene at the end. But as of this point, the antichrist is in supreme command.

At the middle of the tribulation, when he is now the supreme ruler, he then puts his image up in the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, and the Jews realize that they've been had. They realize the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy that the abomination of desolation has been put up in a sacred place. The Jews who are smart will remember doctrine and the warning to flee Judea, and they'll get out and head for the hills. Any failure to worship the King of the West results in the execution of the citizens. God tells his believers however to have no fear of physical death at the hands of the antichrist. He says that it's a promotion (Revelation 2:10, 2 Corinthians 5:8).

The characteristics of this great tribulation are very awesome. The first three-and-a-half years is an arrangement called the tribulation. The last three-and-a-half years is termed "the Great Tribulation" (Matthew 24:21). This is a period which we're told is to be shortened. It will not be a full three-and-a-half years. The reason for that is to prevent the total destruction of humanity on the earth (Matthew 24:22). John has had several visions concerning this period of history which he recorded in the book of Revelation. These visions were presented in this book in symbolic form.

**The Four Horsemen**

One of the important visions he had was concerning the four horsemen. The first was a rider on a white horse which means struggle for world domination by the king of the West (Revelation 6:1-2). This horseman represents bringing warfare upon the earth.

The second rider was a rider on a red horse which meant war on the earth (Revelation 6:3-4). Disarmament and peace treaties are absolutely worthless. The time will come when the worst wars will be experienced.

Then there was a third rider which is a rider on a black horse which we have in Revelation 6:5-6. The black horse stands for famine--famine during the tribulation period. That passage of Scripture will also tell you that a man has to work a whole day to be able to buy three cheap meals or one good meal. Now if a man has to work all day just to buy three meals that can feed himself, and whatever else he may share out of that with his family, obviously, one thing that will be rampant in the tribulation period is inflation. This again is part of the moving of the furniture. It is unbelievable to see the inflation that is taking place around the world today. I think we are headed for the tribulation, and consequently, I think that this is part of moving our country to where its economic strength is destroyed.

The fourth rider is on a grayish green horse, and that means death during the Great Tribulation from war; famine; disease; and, from demon-controlled ruler's (Revelation 6:7-8).

Part of the tribulation scene also includes an angelic battle. At the middle of the tribulation, Michael and his angels come to grips with Satan and his demons. They have a battle out in space, and Michael and his angels are victorious (Revelation 12:4, 7-10). The good angels win, and Satan and his demons are cast out of heaven. In our day, they can now enter the third heaven as they did, for example, in the story of Job. They are there now constantly accusing you and me every time we sin. Before our Father, they accuse us in order to make a claim that He should condemn us. At this point, Satan will be cast out. All of heaven will rejoice. However, the earth is now in for Satan's wrath and hatred (Revelation 12:12).

Up to this time, he has been trying to bring perfect environment on the earth. Satan was the original environmentalist. He has many followers today. Up to this time, he has been trying to create perfect environment. When he is evicted from heaven, he recognizes, the Bible says, that "his time is short." He is a very keen student of the Word of God. He knows everything the Bible says. Some of you once in a while come up to me and say, "When Satan reads the Bible, and he sees what it's saying, why is it that he doesn't just give up? Why does he keep thinking he can get around? He sees how it has always been fulfilled. He's been frustrated at every move." Well, it's the same reason that you and I keep trying in the things that are wrong. The same reason we think we can keep getting around and maneuvering, and we can get by in some other way. Satan knows that if he doesn't try, it's hopeless. It's already hopeless, but he does not give up.

When Satan sees that it's near the end, and he realizes that he's right here in this tribulation period, then he decides to really turn all hell loose on this earth. He is angry; he is mad; and, he is going to make all of humanity suffer--particularly one group of humanity. This is the one group that has caused him all of this grief. This was the group through which Jesus Christ was born, and that is the Jewish people. So he focuses in on them in order to destroy them. The idea being that when Jesus Christ returns, he is to set up a Millennial Kingdom on this earth. In this kingdom are to be human beings in the same condition that you and I are right now.

You and I will be in the Millennial Kingdom, but we will not have these bodies of sin. We will have glorified bodies. You will look just the way you look now. There will be no change on that. You won't look any different. You'll be freed from the limitations of time and space. However, there will be people on this earth who are in natural human bodies. A base group around which this is to be built is the Jewish people. Satan says, "I'll kill every Jew. When Jesus Christ returns, there won't be one living Jew on this earth. Then let Him try to have His kingdom. Furthermore I'll kill every gentile." That's why he was against the gentile believers because there'll be none of them.

This period of the millennium begins a new civilization at the beginning of the kingdom period, and everybody is born again. So the period of the kingdom begins with everybody born again. If there is nobody alive, Satan has frustrated God's plan. Because his time is short, he zeros in to destroy all the Jews so that there are none of them left. He unleashes history's greatest wave of anti-Semitism (Revelation 12:6, 13-17). Those who stand for the Lord, the believing Jews, will lose their right to work; to buy things; and, to sell things (Revelation 13:16-17). But it's the knowledge of doctrine that will keep these Jews from worshiping Satan or the statue of the antichrist. They will choose suffering, and they will choose martyrdom because they know where history is moving.

**The Mark of the Beast**

Some of the Jewish believers will be cared for by gentile believers who will share the food that they have with them from whatever source they have it. Matthew 25:43-45 tells us about this. These will be the Gentiles who, by this act, will have evidenced that they are born again and who will be permitted to go into the millennium alive. They will form the living body of gentiles just as the Jewish believers, saved under the ministry of the 144,000, will form the living body of the Jews in their natural bodies who will enter the Millennial Kingdom. Of course, the easy way out of all this will be to accept the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). Unbelieving Jews and unbelieving gentiles will do this.

The rulers of this period will be like the rulers that we have today. The political rulers of the world are usually ignorant of the fact that they are there by divine placement. The longer the nations have continued on the face of the earth, the more degraded political leaders have become. The climax of that downward trend will come in the tribulation period. The king of the West, the antichrist, will demand his worship (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 19:20). He will be the supreme dictator of the whole earth, and he'll take orders only from Satan. All other political leaders on the earth will bow to the king of the West, and they will all be a very sorry lot. God's grace will be offered in salvation to those who will believe.

**The Two Witnesses**

Two of the great witnesses will be Moses and Elijah who will return to add their witness to Satan's earth in that time. They will have all of their old powers that they had in the Old Testament, including the calling down of fire; the plagues; and, the whole bit. They'll be in very good form (Revelation 11:3-4). All the world will hate them, and all the world will fear them. The king of the West, the antichrist, will discover something about them that he's discovered about the 144,000--they can't kill them. They will do their best to kill Moses and Elijah.

Finally, after three-and-a-half years of testimony, God allows a demon to kill these two witnesses (Revelation 11:7-12). As this is projected on the satellite television system, all of the world will rejoice. God has arranged that these two bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three days. Everybody will be having a very wonderful time because these two witnesses who kept aggravating them with doctrine will be gone. The television camera will move in for close-ups; back again; around this way and that way; and, they will rejoice. In fact, everybody will be so happy, the Bible says, that they're going to exchange presents. It's going to be Christmas over dead bodies--Christmas at a funeral, and exchanging gifts with one another.

While the cameras are zooming in on a little close-up, all of the cameramen are going to have a fit. While they're standing there with their mouths open, the bodies are going to come back to life. They're going to stand up, right there in the street, and dust themselves off. They're going to just rise right up and go to heaven. All of the presents are going to be returned the next day because the fun and games are over. They didn't have as much to rejoice in as they thought. God is rearranging his household, and Satan is more maddened and indignant than he ever was before.

One thing that is encouraging from this incident is that these two men were untouchables until God says, "Your job is through." That's exactly what the Bible says. Until their work was finished, they could not be touched. So take courage that you can't be touched until God is finished with you. As long as you are functioning in His work and in His plan for you, you are untouchable relative to your life. When you are through (Revelation 11:7), there is nothing that can keep you from being removed.

Well, he's holding back the final consequences for a very simple reason. He is a God of mercy. He could let the thunder loose tomorrow, and He could strike the world down. He could take us home to heaven. He could set all this in motion, but why does he delay? 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." You would make a great mistake if you think the tribulation period is not coming. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

We trust that you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal savior. That's why God has not unleashed the time of the tribulation. If it were to happen today, and you are an unbeliever, we would go, and you would stay behind. You would enter this period that we have not yet finished describing in the intensity and the horror which people will experience in this time. It is beyond our imagination. If God in mercy is waiting to give you a chance to believe, then it would be the point of wisdom for you to do so. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)