***The Great Tribulation

RV161-02***

We are beginning a new series in Revelation 12:13-17. Our subject is "The Last Persecution."

**Bible Prophecy**

Satan and his demons have for centuries been trying to frustrate God's plan of the ages by destroying the Jewish people who are at the center of that plan. ... You and I are part of this present church age. It is a distinct age in the plan of God. It was called a mystery because it was never revealed in the Old Testament. It was a complete secret, and it came as a total surprise to the early apostles, that God was switching from Judaism to Christianity, a dramatic new endeavor, in order for God to bring together a royal family of the highest type of human beings who would make up the church, and would consist of the innermost family of God, related to Jesus Christ as a bride to her husband.

**The End of the Church Age**

You and I are living someplace right down near the very end of this age. As we approach the year 2000, we have covered 6,000 years of human history, and we suspect very strongly that seventh millennium of human history will indeed be the great Davidic kingdom here on this earth, the millennium that Christ came originally to establish.

**The Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ**

We are interested in what is going to happen in the immediate future. There's nothing prophetically now that has to take place before the rapture. No event has to take place for this to happen. The Lord Jesus Christ will come down from heaven and catch up all of us dead and alive believers to meet Him in the air, and promptly returning to heaven. There we will continue for a seven-year period, while other things take place down here on earth. During that seven-year period, we will stand before what the Bible calls the Judgment Seat of Christ, where the books will be opened, and the record of our divine service (how we lived our lives) will be reviewed. That divine service will be evaluated for what was the product of God the Holy Spirit, and therefore considered divine good, over against that which was the product of our own efforts, of sin nature inspiration), which is human good. The human good is worthless. It's burned up and thrown out. The divine good is the basis of special rewards for all eternity.

**The Tribulation Period**

While that's going on up there, meanwhile, down here on earth, the last seven years of God's predicted program to Daniel, of His dealing with the Jewish people, will be completed. The last seven years never were completed, because on Palm Sunday, the final and official rejection of Jesus Christ was made. That was to the very day. Would you believe it? I mean, it was to the very day of 483 prophetic years that Daniel had predicted. Well, God's dealings were to be 490 years. So, seven prophetic years have not been fulfilled. They are now put in here, and we call them the years of the tribulation.

This seven-year period is divided into two parts. During the first three-and-a-half years, the world is euphoric. They have finally gotten rid of the Christians. There are no more of these negative fundamentalists around, waving the Bible, and literally interpreting the Bible. The antichrist is in charge of Western Europe. He's not a world dictator. He's a dictator over only the nations that once composed the ancient Roman Empire. But things are riding high. There are a few things that were going bad. The seal judgments are popping in to upset things. The first of the trumpet judgments are being interjected to upset things.

However, by and large, things are very nice, especially for the Jew, because the antichrist comes on, and he is a powerful figure, no doubt created by the international forces of business and of the men who are in touch with the spirit world called the masters of wisdom, and who have been gradually bringing this world around in order to bring it under the control of one great, charismatic, powerful figure, who will then become the ruler of the world, with these men, the elitists of industry; of business; and, of religion who will guide this world under the direction of these demonic spirits.

These men are cultured; they are refined; and, you don't know who they are. They stay in the back. They hide themselves with multiple front organizations. We talk about the Council on Foreign Relations. We talk about the Trilateral Commission. These organizations are interwoven fronts, but in the innermost recesses of this world, there sits a hierarchy of men who meet and discuss things. Nobody knows what they say. A few know who they are. They work through the agencies of government. They manipulate the governments of this world. They move things about in order to accomplish their goals. They are moving toward the millennium that Satan wants to create. With the church gone, these men come into power, and they put forward their man, the antichrist, and things are looking great.

A great commercial center is established at the ancient city of Babylon. It becomes a world commercial center. Great religious enterprise is begun. All the people of the world are worshiping together in a single unity, and great powers are being demonstrated by this man who rules from Western Europe. Because he is so powerful, he puts the Arabs in their place. He says, "There will be no more picking on the Jews, and no more conflict. We're going to have peace if we have to shove it down your throat. The Jew is not to be touched." The Jews are euphoric.

By this time, the United States is only a very sub-power in the world, probably because of the fact that there are so many Christians in the United States today. It is probably because when this event of the rapture takes place, this nation is devastated. Some of its finest; its most knowledgeable; and, its most effective human beings are suddenly taken out of this nation by the millions. The result is that only the lowlife type of Americans are left here – these that you see in the entertainment world, and these that you see as the opinion-makers of our society. All of the scum balls that are leading our world through its communication media are the people who are left. What do you think is going to happen to this nation? That's only one reason. There are several others which puts the United States into a rapid eclipse.

So, the Jew doesn't have his old friend anymore. The United States isn't here in the power position to be able to help the Jew. The United States is having second thoughts about that, as a matter of fact, right now. Just watch and see if the United States does not now begin to put pressure on the Jews and say, "Listen, you got that West Bank as a result of these people jumping on you and trying to beat your brains out. Quite properly, you took that, including your city of Jerusalem, and you have established for yourself, with the Golan Heights and the positions that you now hold, such that you have defensible borders, but we want you to give it back. There's not enough room in all of these vast countries of the Arab world for all these poor Palestinians. They've got to stay right there on the West Bank, and you must give it back to them." If Israel does, they would be in a very weakened position militarily.

So, here comes the antichrist saying, "I'm going to be your friend." They will welcome him, and he will make a peace treaty with them, and they will rebuild their temple. The sacrifices will begin, and everything's going to be looking just great. And with the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip and the West Bank gone from them, they at least are able to depend on the antichrist.

**Mid-Tribulation**

But in the middle of the tribulation period, something terrible happens. At the middle of the tribulation, as we have already learned, Satan is thrown out of heaven. He can no longer enter God's throne room to accuse the saints. As a matter of fact, he's thrown out of the heavens (plural). He can't even come off this earth anymore. He can't come in the first, second, or third heavens whatsoever. Consequently, he is in a great rage, and he turns against the Jews, and this is where we are in our study. He moves the antichrist to break the treaty of seven years that he has made with the Jewish people, and to establish himself in their temple with a statue of himself as their god, upon the pain of death to those who will not worship him.

**The Great Tribulation**

The last part of the tribulation, Jesus called "the great tribulation." It is going to be horrendous. The destruction of the Jews will be worldwide, on such a mass scale that it is incomprehensible to the human mind. We have just come through a very brief war where we have again seen what brutality and what vileness can come out of the human heart, and what people can do to one another.

**The Millennium**

So, this is the period that now continues. It will be terminated by the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There's a difference between the Second Coming and the rapture. When we talk about the Second Coming, we're talking about when Christ actually comes down, and His feet again touch the Mount of Olives from whence He went to heaven, and He will destroy the nations of the world which have gathered to do battle with him. Then will begin the 1,000-year period. After the climactic series of battles of Armageddon, Satan will be placed into the abyss for 1,000 years with his demons. So, you'll have a world that begins with everybody born-again, for all unbelievers will be put to death, Jew and gentile. Christ is now ruling from Jerusalem. This goes on for 1,000 years, and eventually ends up in the new heaven and the new earth of our eternity.

**The Great White Throne**

At the end of that 1,000 years, the great white throne judgment takes place, at which all unbelievers stand and are judged. I was at a funeral recently, were a fraternal group was thanking God for their being able to stand before the great white throne. Right away, I knew that they did not understand the Word of God, because if there is any place you don't want to stand, it is before the great white throne of God, because that is a bad place to be. If you're standing there, you're doomed. All they're going to do is tell you how bad your hell is going to be, depending on how extensive was your sinfulness. That particular group happens to be one of the masters of organization of wisdom in the background. It is one of the conspiratorial groups, and has been for centuries, that is preparing the world for the antichrist. That was interesting that they, being in that position, should have been praising the great white throne. Where do you think they learned that?

**The Gulf War**

Well, what we have just seen in the Gulf is the latest attempt of Satan to destroy the people of Israel in order to frustrate this plan of God that we have outlined for you. It has ended in total disaster for Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Israel has once more survived. ... Saddam Hussein has left his country in shambles. This shows you what a nation can do when it acts in righteousness. Whether we should have been there or not is beside the point. The United States has shown that it can act according to the principles of the doctrine of warfare, with integrity, as it did not in Korea and Vietnam.

I'm getting a little sick of the president talking about putting the depressive effects of Korea and Vietnam behind us. He is talking about putting the burden that has intimidated the American people behind us. However, he should be saying, "This time, we did not permit government to do to our people what the former presidents and administrations did by not allowing our military forces to go for a victory. But instead, we permitted the enemy to hold the handle of the meat grinder, while we fed our men into the meat grinder, and we said, "Please stop turning that handle." This time, we took the handle, and we put the enemy into the meat grinder until he decided to quit. That is the way God says that you conduct a war. That is the godly way to handle human conflict when it's necessary in a just war, which is always a just war when it defends the national sovereignty.

So, an attempt has been made to destroy the Jewish people. Had Saddam Hussein indeed been permitted to carry out his plan, he would have been extremely destructive to the Jews. His weapons would have been turned upon them, once he had Saudi Arabia in his grasp, and he had the world by the throat with the control of oil. Israel survives. Saddam Hussein was gasping his last, and doing his last destructive act, interestingly enough, at the very moment that Israel was celebrating the feast of Purim. And I thought, "That's really ironic." Here, on the very day that, finally, Hussein says, "I give up," the Jews are celebrating the feast of Purim. The Feast of Purim is a celebration that comes from the book of Esther, when another tyrant, Haman, had convinced the Medo-Persian king to issue an order to kill every Jew in the kingdom on a certain day. And God, through Esther, frustrated that plan. That is commemorated by the Jews to this day in the feast of Purim. So, of all things, on the day that Saddam gives up, they're celebrating Purim in Israel.

The victorious coalition of the Gulf War has defeated Saddam Hussein, but you should understand, as people who know the Scriptures, that this has also moved the world closer to its own destruction. There is now euphoria in this nation, and around the world, that the United Nations is capable of producing world peace. That's not true. There is the confidence of the United States in its call to bring peace between Arabs and Jews. The United States is going to pursue that with a vengeance, I can assure you, to bring peace between Arabs and Jews. That can only be done at the expense of the Jewish people.

**Russia**

There is now, as the result of this victory, the illusion of viewing the Soviets as friends of America, when the Soviets, the Bible clearly tells us, are going to be one of the nations that tries in the future to destroy Israel. The Soviet government today, because of its attempt to put a human face on the brutality of socialism, is now under the control of the KGB and of the army. And Gorbachev is hanging on for dear life. He cannot offend the secret police, and he cannot offend the army, which now controls the country.

If you understand that, then you will see how it is that the Scriptures are exactly true – that this power from the north is going to gather its Arab allies, and at a certain point in time, in the middle of the tribulation, incidentally, is going to come sweeping down upon Israel because Soviet Russia has to be able to get in that position of controlling the crossroads of the continents that Israel possesses, so that Russia may then dominate the Arab oil fields, because Russia needs the wealth. It is a third- or fourth-rate, broken down, tinhorn country that is hardly able to survive. And the people are getting so fed up of doing without, and of suffering under that delusion of the socialism, that they almost have revolution on their hands in mass.

Russia is going to go to the places where she thinks she can get the things she needs, and take them. I should tell you that it will not take a military force to defeat Russia at that point. The Bible is explicitly clear that God Himself will destroy Russia. Just as you saw Iraqis trailing back to their country, you will see only one-sixth of the Russians traveling back to Russia after God destroys them on the field of battle Himself.

**The Battle of Armageddon**

So, God's Word makes it clear that it is very foolish to assume that the world will not tolerate dictators anymore. The world will tolerate dictators, and it does. God's Word makes it clear that history is moving toward the greatest of all dictators in the antichrist, who will, in time, at the middle of the tribulation, when Russia has been destroyed, then there's a vacuum, and there's no one to keep the antichrist from moving from just being a dictator of Western Europe to being the dictator of all the world. It is here at the end of the tribulation that the nations of the world get fed up with the antichrist, and they pool their resources for the great attack that eventuates in the battle of Armageddon.

**The New Age Movement**

So, powerful men who are in business, banking, government, and religion are now moving things one step further in their conspiracy to create a new world built on socialism, and governed by themselves as the elite. The world is being prepared to accept a universal religion. It is based upon the ancient Babylonian paganism, which we know today is the New Age religion, which has its basic thesis that man is his own god: "There is deity within yourself. Do you want to know something about spiritual things? Look within yourself. It's all in there. If you will just open it up, you will find it."

Don't think about Shirley MacLaine in these little cutesy, prominent people. They're trivial characters. They're just ornaments out there that the world conspirators put out there to keep your eyes off of them. She is an insignificant person. The New Age network of organizations is guided by demon masters, and it is now ready to lead mankind into a millennium without Jesus Christ. That's what Satan is trying to do.

**The Jews Flee**

In this next section, in Revelation 12:13-17, we are actually resuming a narrative which was interrupted at verse 6. If you run your eye back to verse 6, you will see that the woman, which represents Israel, is fleeing into the wilderness where God has prepared a place for her, so that she could be nourished for 1,260 days, which is the equivalent of three-and-a-half prophetic years. This is the middle of the tribulation. This is the same point of time when Satan is cast out of heaven. Then the narrative was interrupted by giving us the background about the battle in heaven with Michael and his angels and Satan and his angels, that precipitated this action on the part of the devil, and then the hymn of joy from the people in heaven who were glad that Satan was thrown out of heaven's throne room, no longer to accuse the believers, and that they themselves were victorious. Though they had been martyred, they had overcome the devil by the blood of Christ, the Lamb who had died for them, because of the word of their testimony, their knowledge of doctrine had carried them through so that they could speak for God officially and accurately, and because they were willing to be martyrs. They didn't love their lives above their loyalty to Jesus Christ.

So, Revelation 12:13 picks up the story, which was interrupted then at verse 6, about this woman fleeing for her life, namely the Jews. And it gives further details about this flight during the tribulation from the antichrist's wrath. The sections are now to be put together. Having failed to prevent the birth, and the atoning work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Satan then turns in his rage destroy the Jews through whom Christ came.

Revelation 12:13: "And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child." The dragon, as we have already learned, is a symbol for Satan. This particular name is applied here in order to distress the bestiality of Satan. He is portrayed here as a repulsive reptile. Satan is a brutal beast, and the dragon realizes, when he has been thrown down to the earth, that something dramatic has happened to him. This is at mid-tribulation, and this was done to him by Michael the Angel. Specifically, he is thrown to the earth.

**Michael Defeats Satan**

So, here is the picture. Michael wins the battle. He has executed effectively. Michael comes right to the heart of the matter. He has acted with no nonsense. The job is finished, and the victory is won. Then he follows with the mopping up, which always has to be done. He takes Satan by the scruff of the neck, and throws him out of heaven. The guy falls to the earth with a thud, and I mean to the earth. The dust blows up. He gets up spewing dirt out of his mouth, hopping mad, and finds that he is no longer airborne. He cannot rise above the earth. He cannot even move through the atmosphere, the first heaven in which we live. He can't even do that. He is truly earthbound. He is in rage over his humiliation, and he knows, from Bible prophecy, that this marks a point in time, three-and-a-half prophetic years short of the return of Jesus Christ.

**Prophetic Years**

When I say prophetic years, you do understand that in the Bible, a year is based on the lunar cycle. One month was new moon to new moon. Therefore, a year in the Bible, in prophecy, is 360 days, not 365 solar days. It is 365-and-a-quarter really, and even then a little more. But the Jews periodically threw in special holidays, and that's how they made up for those days that were lacking. So, when we talk about 1,260 days equaling three-and-a-half years, we say "prophetic years" – years of 360 days each.

Well, Satan knows that he has 1,260 days, and then it is going to be all over. John says that the result is that Satan decides, in his rage, to proceed to persecute the woman. The woman symbolizes the nation of Israel. This woman is further identified as the one who gave birth to the male child, referring to Jesus. The woman is the virgin Mary. The word "child" is understood. It's the male child, being Jesus Christ. Satan has failed in his attempt to prevent the birth of the Christ child, and he has failed in his attempts to keep the Christ child, as a grown man, from paying the price of sin of the world, which is death, with his own death upon the cross.

In Galatians 4:4-5, the apostle Paul says that when the fullness of the time came, in God's program of events: "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." At the proper point of time, God prepared a human body for His Son, Jesus. Jesus always existed, because he is God, but His human body began at the point in time of the conception by God the Holy Spirit.

This is a very precious truth. It is a very important truth. It distinguishes the fact that Jesus Christ is different than ordinary men. Under this kind of a supernatural spiritual birth, by the implantation of God the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ had a human body free of an old sin nature, so that we had a second Adam, who was now able to do what the first Adam should have done in securing eternal life in bliss for all posterity by obedience to God. You can understand why the devil has perverted and blasphemed the event of the virgin birth. You can understand why Satan's system of religion called Mormonism has declared that God the Father is a human being. The Mormons say that He came down one day from heaven, and went into the home of this young woman, Mary, a virgin, and through sexual relations with her, impregnated her to produce the Christ child.

Satan seeks to debase and to corrupt this amazing, fantastic, marvelous truth of the provision of the God-man Jesus Christ with full humanity, such as ourselves, but without the disease of sin. Nevertheless, it is true, and Satan knows it's true, and that's what gives Satan the concern that this child would ever be born. In Genesis 3:15, Adam and Eve were told that this child was on the way, and when he arrived, Satan was going to be put out of business. His head would be crushed. A mortal blow would be delivered to him. So, Satan all along has been trying to prevent the birth of Christ, and to kill Him as a baby, and to kill Him as a man in His ministry, all to no avail.

In Hebrews 2:14, we read, "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (that is, Jesus), likewise, partook of the same, that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death;" that is, the devil. When the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, it was clear that all human beings are now free of death. It holds us temporarily, but it will not hold us forever.

The result is that Satan, now, realizing that this woman, the Jew, has produced this child which spells his own doom, and now just three-and-a-half years away, Satan is beside himself. Therefore, he puts into motion the greatest anti-Semitism worldwide that this world has ever seen. He hates the Jews because they are the chosen people of God. He hates the Jews because, through the Jewish people, the Savior was born to crush Satan's head. The death of Christ on the cross, bearing the sins of mankind, has defeated Satan and has stripped him of the power of death that he could hold over the heads of people. Satan himself realizes that he cannot now stop the judgment of God against him.

That judgment, which was pronounced immediately upon his rebellion in heaven, and which Jesus recorded for us in Matthew 25:41: "He also said to those on his left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." This is where Satan is headed: first, into the pit of the abyss, for the 1,000 years of the millennium; and, then, at the end of the millennium, into the lake of fire forever.

**The Great Tribulation**

The attack on the Jews, during the latter part of the tribulation, which is called the great tribulation, then is Satan's final and most vicious persecution of God's people. That's what Revelation 12:13 is referring to. He realizes now that he has lost control of the heavens. He then turns to persecute the Jewish people, the one who gave birth to the child, Jesus, who has spelled out the doom of Satan. This will be his last effort to kill all living Jews so that he can keep God from being able to establish a Millennial Kingdom with David ruling over the Jewish people. If all the Jewish people are killed, so that there are no Jews in their natural bodies – not resurrected Jews who believed, but Jews who have their natural bodies: if none of them exist, then God cannot have a Millennial Kingdom.

So, Satan comes down and proceeds to make one last effort. The persecution, interestingly enough, begins while the Jews are under the treaty of protection with the antichrist. The United States is probably not around to come to their aid. Satan moves the antichrist to break the treaty, and to do this at mid-tribulation in order to turn against the Jewish people.

We have this breaking of the treaty revealed to us in Daniel 9:27: "He will make a firm covenant with many for one week." The question is, who is "he?" You have to go back to verse 26: "Then after the 62 weeks, the Messiah will be cut off." That's talking about Palm Sunday, when Jesus is finally rejected: "And have nothing." He came to set up a kingdom, to be the King of the Jews, and He ends up with nothing, because they rejected Him: "And the people of the prince who is to come." "The people" here were the people of the Roman Empire, which governed the nations of Western Europe around the Mediterranean Sea. So, "the prince who is to come" is the antichrist. The people from whom this prince will come are the ones who destroyed Jerusalem, the sanctuary, and so on.

**The Abomination of Desolation**

So, verse 27 says, "And he (the antichrist) will make a firm covenant with many for one week (that is, a week of years – seven years). But in the middle of the week, he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offerings. And on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed is poured out on the one who makes desolate." He is the prince. He is the antichrist. And what he does is that, in a wing of the temple, namely in the holy of holies, he sets up his own image, which Daniel calls the abomination that makes desolation.

The antichrist stops the Jews' temple ceremonies; sets up his own statue; and, demands that he be worshiped as God. This is tied together for us in Revelation 13:8 (that interesting chapter we are soon to be in): Revelation 13:8 says, "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (the antichrist), when he sets up his image in that temple. Everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain." All those who are not destined salvation will accept the mark of the beast and they will worship the antichrist as their God.

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus says, "Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation (or the abomination that makes desolate), which was spoken up through Daniel the prophet (which I just read to you), standing in a holy place, let the reader understand." So, we should have no confusion about these events, and people who know the Bible, who are not believers, who might remember this bit of information I've just given to you, and they see that the antichrist sets up his image in this temple of the Jews, and they're living during the tribulation, that should motivate them immediately to trust in Christ as Savior, for they will see, indeed, that God is about to return, and that God's Word is true indeed.

**The Worst Anti-Semitism in History**

Well, any refusal by the Jews to worship the antichrist (which is what they will do – they will refuse to do that) will give the excuse to mount the horrendous persecution against them. This persecution is going to be something that the world has never seen before. Those of us who lived through World War II, and those of you who've studied history and know what Adolf Hitler and the Nazis did in Germany to the Jewish people, and to all the countries that they conquered, you would think that nobody could do worse than that. That's a Sunday school picnic in comparison. That was limited. Can you imagine what it will be like to be a Jew in a world where the persecution is worldwide? Everybody is against you, and everybody is authorized to take you down.

This is what Haman was trying to do back in Esther's time. The word went out that if you killed a Jew, and got to keep his wealth. That's the same program that's going to be instituted.

In Jeremiah 30:7, Jeremiah says, "Alas, for that day is great." He's speaking about the last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation: "There is none like it, and it is the time of Jacob's distress. But he will be saved from it." He says, "Alas, that day is great." That's why we call the last half of the tribulation, "the great tribulation." "There is none like it:" There never has been. It is the time of Jacob's distress. Who is Jacob? The Jewish people.

But notice the last phrase. They're not all going to be killed. Some of them will be preserved. This is the great tribulation of Matthew 24:21. This great tribulation persecution will be an all-time great attack upon the Jews. Daniel 12:1 says this about it: "At that time, Michael, the great prince, who stands guard over the sons of your people." Michael is the patron guardian angel of the Jewish people: "Michael, who guards the sons of your people will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time. At that time, your people, everyone who was found written in the book, will be rescued."

This passage is referring to the great tribulation – the last three-and-a-half years. Daniel says that Michael will come to the aid of the Jewish people, those who are born-again, those whose names are written in the book. Those who are believing Jews are going to be under the protective care of the angel Michael, while they, too, will be living in that terrible time.

This great persecution is what was predicted by Daniel in Daniel 7:25: "And he will speak out against the Most High (describing the antichrist), and he will wear down the saints of the Highest One (the Jewish people), and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law. And they will be given into his hands for a time, times, and a-half time." Notice that the antichrist is going to blaspheme God, and he's going to oppose Him, and set himself up as God.

This presentation of the antichrist as God is what is referred to in Revelation 13:6: "And he opened his mouth (the antichrist) and blasphemed against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle; that is, those who dwell in heaven. These verses in the Old and New Testaments come together. The Bible is not a confusing book, and when you put the pieces together, you get an amazing picture. The antichrist is going to come on the scene. He will blaspheme God, and he will declare himself to be God. You might be inclined to say, "That's crazy." But people are going to be acclimated to that idea. That's what the New Age movement is all about – to look upon yourself as God, and to see that you are the superior creature, and that if you will accept that fact, there are powers of the masters of wisdom who will give you great powers; great wealth; great prosperity; and, great wisdom above other people. They'll give you information, and they will make you famous.

**Time, Times, and a-Half Time**

2 Thessalonians 2:4 also ties into this: "Who opposes (speaking of the antichrist) and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship. He takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as God." So, the first thing that antichrist is going to do is blaspheme God, Daniel 7:25 tells us. Furthermore, he will set himself up as God. Then the antichrist will oppress the saints of God. It says that he will do this on a worldwide scale. He will wear down the saints of the Most High. And it says that he will disregard all previous laws and moral standards, and he will institute his own – what we call New Age doctrines, in your own morality. He says that the length of this is going to be time, times, and a-half time. This is exactly the same length of time as the 1,260 days of verse 6.

Let me give you a little bit of interpretation. How do we know what "time, times, and a-half time" means? It's not as clear in the English. Daniel 11:13 says, "For the king of the North (Russia and her allies) will again rise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years, he will press on with a great army and much equipment." "An interval of some years" in the Hebrew is literally "at the end of the times, even years." So, there is our clue that the word "time" is a word for a year. And "times" (plural) is a word for two years. That's the way the Scriptures use this phrase. In Daniel 7:25, we have time (one year); times (two more years – that makes three years); and, a-half time (a half year). So, it is three-and-a-half prophetic years. It comes out to the same period of the 1,260 days.

So, this period that, we read about in the book of the Revelation, that the Jews will be under the slaughter of the antichrist, is this last three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. It will reach unbelievable proportions. As a matter of fact, we're given very specific information on how many Jews will go down. We think it's terrible that six million Jews were killed in World War II.

However, of all the Jews that live in the world today, and will be alive in the very near future during the tribulation, Zechariah 13:8-9 tell us that when the antichrist starts this last great persecution, the results will be far greater than that: "It will come about in all the land, declares the Lord, that two parts in it will be cut off and perish;" that is, two-thirds of all the world's Jews will be killed. Of all the millions of Jews in the world, two-thirds of them are going to be killed by the antichrist, and a third will be left in it: "I'll bring the third part through the fire (that is, through the persecution); refine them as silver is refined; and, test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. And I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, "The Lord is my God."

**The Jews either Die or Turn to Christ as the True Messiah**

The result of what the Jews are experiencing during the tribulation, when they see their countrymen dying like flies, is that they will then begin to get the message that they may have made a terrible mistake about Jesus of Nazareth. They will start looking back in Scriptures. They will start considering the New Testament. They will start matching the life and the claims and the credentials of Jesus Christ with the Old Testament identifying marks, and they will say, "My God, He *was* the Messiah. What have we done?" And out of that, they're going to be turned to silver and turned to gold in their quality, because they will turn to Christ and be saved. The result will be that the one-third of them who turn to Christ will survive. But two-thirds of the Jews will be slaughtered all over the world.

In the United States, there are six million Jews. The city of New York has two million alone. So, there are more Jews in the United States today than there are in Israel, which has only three million. Out of the six million Jews in the United States, four million of them are going to be killed by the antichrist. Just to give you a little ratio, within our country, two million of them will survive. The only way that Israel, as a nation, is going to survive this kind of an onslaught, is by the return of Jesus Christ. That's what Ezekiel 20:33-38 reveals to us:

"'As I live,' declares the Lord God, 'surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I shall be King over you. And I shall bring you out from the peoples, and gather you from the lands where you are scattered with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples. And there I shall enter into judgment with you face-to-face. As I entered into judgment with your father's in the wilderness in the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,' declares the Lord God. "And I will make you pass under the rod, under My judgment, to determine which of you Jews are saved, and which of you are unsaved. (This is after the Second Coming of Christ." And I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge from you the rebels, and those who transgress against Me. I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourned, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the Lord."

So, Ezekiel says, "The time is coming when Christ will return, and He will remove the last of the unbelieving Jews. He will preserve the believing Jews. He will gather them from all over the world, and will bring them back to the land of Palestine." That, obviously, you can see has never happened. It is a future event. It is following the persecution of the antichrist from the midpoint of the tribulation.

The apostle Paul referred to the same event in Romans 11:26-27: "And thus all Israel will be saved, just as is written. The deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." And I don't think that any of you would want to argue that God has removed ungodliness from the Jewish people today: "And thus is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." Certainly, the sins of the Jews have not been taken away. This is a future event.

Israel is going to be restored to the absolute unconditional promises of the covenant that God has made with that nation. The future of the Jew ultimately is very bright, but on the immediate horizon it is very bad.

Hosea 2:14-23 referred to this ultimate restoration. This is an extended passage, but here's what God's plan is for the Jewish people. He is not through with them. The amillennialists and the postmillennialists are quite wrong in saying that God has transferred all of this up to heaven, and that there is no further use for the Jewish people. They're quite wrong. Here is what God is going to do. This passage in Hoses is for their comfort. Any Jew who reads this in the midst of the tribulation persecution will at least understand where history is moving for his people, and have some hope. Listen to this tender passage.

Now, remember that Israel was, in the Old Testament, compared to a wife. She was Jehovah's Wife. So, put yourself in the position of how your wife is treating you, her husband. What has she been? She's been an adulterous wench. She's been a typical entertainment-world, TV, movie-star type. She has been strictly a lowlife, and has done nothing but bring grief, dishonor, and embarrassment to her husband. What should this husband do with her? What does she deserve? And when this husband sent the Son to bring her out of her sin and establish her in her full kingdom glory, she spit on him. She beat him, and ultimately murdered him. What should the husband do to a wife who acts like that?

Hosea 2:14: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her." I'm going approach her; going to appeal to her; and, going to entice her: "Bring her into the wilderness. I'm going to speak kindly to her. Then I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope, and she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up from the land of Egypt." I'm going to restore my adulterous wife, Israel, and I'm going to bring her back to when we were both young, and we just gotten married, and it was all happy, and she was there in the place we lived, and there was a song on her lips. There hasn't been a song on the lips of Jewish people for a long time. God says, "I'm going to bring her up as she sang for the relief when I took her out of Egyptian slavery. She's going to sing like that again, because I'm going to take her out from under the under the rod of the antichrist.

"'And it will come about in that day,' declares the Lord, 'that you will call Me my husband, and will no longer call Me my Baal (which is the Hebrew word for 'master' and which is connected with the Baal worship). For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth.'" You're not going to talk about those gods of the phallic cults anymore: "So that they will be mentioned by their names no more. In that day, I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field; the birds of the air; and, the creeping things of the ground." God is going to reestablish their dominance over nature. He's going to reestablish what he told Adam to do: "I want you to hold dominion over all this world. Use the earth for your enjoyment. Once more, Israel will be able to enjoy the earth.

"And I will abolish the bow; the sword; and, war from the land, and I will make them lie down safely." Obviously, this has never happened. If there's anything that Israel is not about to give up, it's her patriot missiles: "She does not lie down safely." well, she lies down safely tonight. She has pulled down the gas-proof rooms. She has pulled all the tape and all the screening off. The gas masks have been put back in a box. She dwells in safety for a moment, but everybody in the house knows that the gas mask is right there on the top shelf in the closet. You know how to get it fast, and you know how to react. There is not safety.

"And I will betroth you to Me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in loving kindness and compassion." God says, "I'm going to have you engaged to me again, as if we were starting all over again. I'm going to do it in righteousness, in fairness, in loving kindness, which is the Hebrew word for 'grace,' and in compassion. I'm going to treat you with love: "And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, then you will know the Lord." "I'm going to make an engagement with you because I am your faithful husband, and I will be faithful to you as you have never been to Me."

"'It will come about in that day that I will respond,' declares the Lord. 'I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth, and the earth will respond to the grain, and to the new wine, and to the oil. And they will respond to Jezreel." God said, "I'm going to make the heavens work for them; give them the crops; and, give them the good conditions. They're going to go to work on the land, and things are going to come up marvelously for everyone:" "I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion. I will say to those who are not my people, 'You are my people,' and they will say, 'You are my God' (meaning Jesus Christ)!"

What a change. What a difference. In the midst of the persecution, the slaughter of the antichrist, the Jewish people can go back to Hosea, and grab onto that marvelous promise.

Now, God has to provide some dramatic escape for the Jewish people in this horrendous time of the greatest persecution of all time. When He provides that escape, which he does, Satan counters in a most amazing way to stop the fleeing Jews. He is not going to give up with his last gasping effort and breath of his desire to kill every Jew on the face of the earth.

We look at God's provision, and at Satan's counterattack next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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