

AN ANALYSIS OF HAL LINDSEY'S "THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH"

One of the most popular books of the 1970's was "The Late Great Planet Earth" by Hal Lindsey. Written at the height of the Cold War it captured the interest of millions relating Bible prophecy to developments and world powers on the scene at this time. It was written shortly after the 1967 Six Day War which almost brought man to brink of nuclear war.

He popularised prophecies that related to the restoration of the nation of Israel, as well as prophecies that related to Russia, the other great superpower at the time and like Herbert Armstrong, felt that developments within the Common Market would lead to a future United Europe that would be like a revived Roman Empire.

He also popularised the evangelical teaching of the rapture where christians would be caught up in the air with Christ before the tribulation starts and protected in heaven before the visible return of Christ at the end of the tribulation.

The key points in his book include the following:

- The Jews would be restored to the land of Palestine and would build a new Temple of God.
- Before the tribulation there would be a rapture of christians to heaven to be protected from the Great Tribulation.
- The USA will cease to be a world power and are not mentioned in Bible prophecy.
- The Jews will make a treaty with a coming United Europe which Europe will break 3½ years later when it moves into Jerusalem and causes the abomination of desolation.
- The King of South is an Arab alliance which attacks Israel.
- Russia is both the King of the North (and Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38 & 39) which then invades Middle East and takes advantage of this first move by Arabs.
- The Beast power is a coming United Europe.
- This European leader, also known as the Beast, gets mortally wound and healed by false prophet who he is closely associated with.
- The false prophet is a Jew and a master of black satanic magic who proclaims himself to be God in the Jewish temple.
- The Babylonian religion led by him is equated with new age/astrology and will be a world religion dominated from Rome.
- The Image of the beast is a statue of the European leader which the false prophet causes people to worship.
- The King of the North (Russia) established in the Middle East will hear news out of north (Rome) and east (China). The King of the South goes off to fight Europe and the Chinese who counterattack. A final showdown between the forces occurs in Israel at Megiddo (Armageddon) at which point Jesus Christ returns to rule the world.

Let's have a look at some of the prophetic interpretations of Hal Lindsey and see where his interpretation of Bible prophecy matches what the Bible does say and where it doesn't.

End-time Jewish Nation and Jewish Temple

There are a few passages of scripture where Hal sees the birth of the modern nation of Israel as fulfilling.

The key passages that Hal Lindsey uses are **Matthew 24:15** where Christ refers to the abomination of desolation in an end-time context, **Zechariah 12** and also **Ezekiel 36 & 37**. Let's look at each of these passages. Hal writes on pages 52-56:

Jesus also pinpointed the general time of His return when His disciples asked Him two important questions, 'What will be the sign of your coming?' they wanted to know. And 'What will be the sign of the end of the age?'...

In answer Jesus gave many general signs involving world conditions [in Matthew 24] which He called birth pangs...One of the great signs He predicted, however, is often overlooked. He speaks of the Jewish people being in the land of Palestine as a nation at the time of His return...Even the Temple has to be rebuilt according to the sign given in **Matthew 24:15**...

Jesus Christ predicted an event which would trigger a time of unparalleled catastrophe for the Jewish nation shortly before His second coming. This 'abomination of desolation' or desecration of the inner sanctum of the Temple would occur at the midway point of God's last seven years of dealing with the Jewish people before setting up the long-awaited Kingdom of God (**Daniel 9:27**)".

The first thing that needs to be noted about **Matthew 24** is relation to what Hal has written is that is a dual prophecy referring both to events in 70 AD when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed and also to the events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. Let's notice what is said at the beginning of **Matthew 24**:

And Jesus went out and departed from the temple. And His disciples came to *Him* to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, There shall not be left here one stone on another that shall not be thrown down. And as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what *shall be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?" (**verses 1-3**).

Notice in relation to Christ's statement about when these stones of the Temple would be thrown down that the disciples said to Him "Tell us when shall these things be?"

Many of the same things that occurred in 70 AD will reoccur in the end-time. Some things mentioned here might occur only in 70 AD, some will occur both in 70 AD and the end-time and then others (such as Christ's return) will only occur in the end-time.

What about the abomination of desolation? Did it occur in 70 AD and is it just limited to that early fulfillment or will we see an end-time abomination of desolation?

The first ancient fulfillment occurred in **168 B.C.** when a crazed Antiochus Epiphanes, who was the Greek ruler who controlled Syria at the time, entered Jerusalem and killed 80 000 men, women and children (2 Maccabees 5:11-14). He then desecrated the temple by offering a sacrifice of swine or pig flesh to a pagan god, Jupiter Olympus.

This occurred before Christ came along so when Christ referred to watching for the abomination of desolation as spoken of by Daniel He was speaking of another yet future fulfillment.

The second ancient fulfillment of the “abomination of desolation” occurred in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple that stood in Jesus' day. At this time Titus captured Jerusalem and erected an idol on the devastated altar according to Josephus in his book “Wars of the Jews” (Book IV, Chapters 5-6).

Will we see a yet future end-time fulfillment of this sign – a third “abomination of desolation”? Based on **Matthew 24** alone there is not enough to confirm this possibility so we need to look elsewhere.

Let's go to the original prophecies of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel. These are given in **Daniel 8** and also in **Daniel 11 and 12**.

Daniel 8 starts off with the prophecy of the ram and the male goat who defeated the ram and had a large horn that was broken and had four notable ones replace the large horn. Scholars are in agreement this refers to the defeat of Persia (the ram) by Greece (the male goat) led by Alexander the Great (the large horn) who died shortly after whose Greek empire was split into four and ruled by his four generals (the four notable ones). In fact, this is the interpretation given to Daniel by Gabriel, the angel, in **verses 20-22**.

It then speaks of a little horn which grew great and moved towards the south and the Glorious Land. He exalts himself and stops the daily sacrifices and tramples the sanctuary (**verses 11-14**).

This little horn was a later king of the Greek Selucid dynasty that ruled from Syria. This was Antiochus Epiphanes referred to above. For 1150 days (2300 evening and morning sacrifices) the daily sacrifices were stopped until the sanctuary was cleansed by Jewish Maccabean leaders.

Verses 23–25 are often used to describe the end-time beast leader but the context is primarily, if not solely, referring to Antiochus Epiphanes. The latter half of **verse 25** says: “He also shall stand up against the Ruler of rulers. But he shall be broken without a hand.” While this could refer to the beast leader being broken by Christ at His second coming it appears to have been fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes. According to the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees, Antiochus died of painful diseases.

Is there an end-time dual fulfillment of these prophecies? Again, it is hard to give a definitive yes here. Syria was swallowed by Rome so an end-time “Roman” empire could be the “latter end of their kingdom” referred to in **verse 23**. In reference to this prophecy of **Daniel 8** Gabriel says in **verse 17**:

Understand, O son of man, for the vision *is* for the time of the end.”

This is the clearest reference to this being for the time of the end shortly preceding the return of Jesus Christ. The abomination of desolation is again referred to in **Daniel 11:31-32** where we read:

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh

desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries:
but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.

The context of this prophecy which has a long chronological flow shows this solely refers to the original abomination of desolation that occurred at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC which was finally cleansed by the Maccabees who were strong and did great exploits.

The abomination of desolation is referred to in one more place in the book of Daniel. In **Daniel 12:11** we read:

“And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days.” The abomination of desolation will be set up and then there shall be 1290 days. There are 1290 days before what?

Let us notice the context. In **Daniel 11** there are a multitude of prophecies that go from the Persian empire through the Greek empire and then onto the Roman empire before there is a 2000 year break and the prophecies then pick up at the time of the end (**verse 40**) and finish off in the first verses of **Daniel 12** with the Great Tribulation (**Daniel 12:1**) and the resurrection of the saints (**Daniel 12:2-3**).

Following this we read about 3 mysterious period of days – a time, times and half a time (**verse 7** - believed to be 3 ½ years or 1260 days), 1290 days (**verse 11**) and 1335 days (**verse 12**). The first period refers to the shattering of the holy people, the second to the abomination of desolation and the third is not specific.

Are these periods referring to the end-time? Most likely they do as we read in **Daniel 12:13**:

But you [Daniel] go on to the end, for you shall rest and will arise at the end of the days.

Daniel’s resurrection is said to occur at the end of the days. If “the days” refers to the three periods of days referred to above then their end appears to occur at the first resurrection.

If this be the case then the abomination of desolation and the taking away of the daily sacrifices in **Daniel 12:11** refers to an end-time abomination of desolation and it would occur 1290 days before the first resurrection occurs.

If the 1150 days of the daily sacrifices and the defilement of the Temple in **Daniel 8:13-14** is dual and has an end-time fulfillment then there would be a period of 140 days before the first resurrection when it will be cleansed, possibly by the Jews and/or the two witnesses. **Revelation 11:2** says that the Gentiles will trod on the holy city for 42 months at the end which is 1260 days in this prophecy so even if such a cleansing occurs before the end the city will still be under the control of the beast power.

The 1150 days (2300 evening and morning sacrifices) primarily refers to the original abomination of desolation. The separate 1290 days connected with an abomination of desolation doesn’t appear to have been fulfilled at the time of the original abomination of

desolation so it appears to be end-time. There is no record of such a timeframe being significant at the time of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 AD.

In his book "Charting the End Times" Tim LaHaye doesn't have the three periods of 1260, 1290 and 1335 days ending at the return of Christ at the same time but has them starting at the same time, the beginning of the Great Tribulation (p.77). He has an extra 30 days after Christ's return for the cleansing of the Temple and then an extra 45 days after for the Judgment of the Nations. If the abomination of desolation occurred at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation and there are 1150 days before it is cleansed then it would be cleansed before the return of Christ not after.

We see the strong possibility of an end-time abomination of desolation but these verses we have looked at so far do not give us definitive proof.

Let's look at another passage that appears to give us the definitive proof we are looking for. In **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** Paul writes:

The man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, setting himself forth, that he is God.

Straight after this Paul says:

And the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (**2 Thessalonians 2:8-9**).

It is fairly safe to say that the man of sin is the same person as the lawless one (i.e. the sinful one). The lying wonders and deceptive miracles appear to be those ascribed to the second beast in **Revelation 13:13-14**. This miracle-working man of sin, therefore, would be the leader of the church power behind the coming United Europe, as opposed to a leader who comes amongst God's church which is also referred to as the Temple of God (though this might be a type).

The man of sin sits IN the Temple of God showing that he goes into a Temple and it is more than just an altar so as far as Bible prophecy is concerned there does appear to be references to an end-time Temple of God that will be desecrated during the Great Tribulation.

Of course, this leads to another problem. According to Jews the place where the Temple stood is the same place where the Islamic Dome of the Rock now stands. Some have speculated that possibly an earthquake or a Jewish attack will clear the Dome of the Rock off the Temple Mount allowing the Temple to be re-built. In either case a full-on attack would follow between the Jews and the Arabs.

I have seen one proposal for expanding the Dome of the Rock with radial extensions that would be for other religions. This is a well-intentioned but naïve proposal that fails to recognize that Islam and the Koran call for a conversion of all infidels to Islam even by means of violence. For Islam to allow extensions to the Dome of the Rock for other religions it would, in effect, be like proclaiming other religions as legitimate alternatives to Islam.

There is, however, another solution that could lead to the construction of a Jewish Temple without any need to touch the Dome of the Rock. New research has come to light showing that the location of the Temples of God that stood in Jerusalem were not on the so-called Temple Mount but further to the south above the Gihon spring where the archaeological City of David is located.

Jesus prophesied that not just the Temple but every stone in Jerusalem would be overturned (**Luke 19:41-44, Matthew 24:1-2**). This did occur in 70 AD according to written sources of the time yet we see Herodian and pre-Herodian stones around the so-called Temple Mount. This apparent contradiction is resolved by recognising that the so-called Temple Mount was the Roman Fort Antonio hence why it was left standing. Many ancient sources describe the Temple has being situated above a spring and the only spring in this area is the Gihon Spring. More information about this subject can be found in the "Lost History of Jerusalem" compilation found at www.rogerswebsite.com/articles.htm.

If this information comes to be accepted by Jewish authorities then this would pave the way for a Jewish temple to be rebuilt on the original Temple site to the south of where it is currently thought to have stood. This long forgotten other site would free the Jewish people today to rebuild the Temple without the removal of the Dome of the Rock were it to be commonly accepted by the Jewish religious authorities.

Hal Lindsey also quotes **Zechariah 12** as showing that there must be a national Jewish presence in the land of Palestine before the return of Jesus Christ. Let's have a look at that passage.

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the peoples all around, and it shall also be against Judah in the siege against Jerusalem. And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples. All who lift it shall be slashed, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

In that day, says Jehovah, I will strike every horse with terror, and his rider with madness. And I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The people of Jerusalem *shall be* my strength in Jehovah of Hosts their God.

In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire among cut grain. And they shall devour all the peoples all around, on the right hand and on the left hand. And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her place, in Jerusalem.

Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the people of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah. In that day Jehovah shall defend around the people of Jerusalem. And it will be, he who is feeble among them at that day *shall be* like David; and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of Jehovah before them.

And it shall be in that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David, and on the people of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of prayers. And they shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only *son*, and shall be bitter over Him, as the bitterness over the first-born (**Zechariah 12:2-10**).

The last verse in the passage where they will look on Him whom they have pierced is clearly a reference to Christ's second coming.

Jerusalem being a burdensome stone for all peoples and who get slashed who try to lift it sounds very reminiscent of the burdensome problem that Jerusalem has become for all the diplomats trying to work out a peace process between the Arabs and Jews especially over the issue of Jerusalem's sovereignty.

It says that God will save the tents of Judah first. This may be taken as a possible reference to the Jews being brought back to the land of Palestine before the rest of the "lost tribes" of Israel. **In verse 6** God says:

In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire among cut grain. And they shall devour all the peoples all around, on the right hand and on the left hand.

This sounds very much like the astonishing military success that God appears to have granted the Jews against the Arab nations around them in their war of independence in 1948, the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur war of 1973.

Hal Lindsey also uses **Ezekiel 36 and 37** to prove there will be an end-time return of the Jews to Palestine before the Great Tribulation. He writes the following:

Right here a careful distinction must be made between 'the physical restoration' to the land of Palestine as a nation, which clearly occurs shortly before the Messiah's coming and the 'spiritual restoration' of all Jews who have believed in the Messiah just after His return to this earth.

The "physical restoration" is accomplished by unbelieving Jews through their human effort. As a matter of fact, the great catastrophic events which are to happen to this nation during 'the tribulation' are primarily designed to shock the people into believing in their true Messiah (**Ezekiel 38; 39**)...

Ezekiel 36 and 37 speak of the final restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine, a restoration from which they will never be scattered again. This restoration has two distinctions which show that it couldn't be speaking of the time when the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile.

The first distinction is that they are to return from a long world-wide dispersion. (The Babylonian dispersion wasn't very long nor was it worldwide.) The second distinction is that this restoration is immediately prior to and connected with the period of tribulation. This period brings about a great spiritual rebirth of the nation and the return of Jesus the Messiah to rescue them from their enemies.

Ezekiel speaks of the physical restoration of the nation when he says: 'But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel; for they are soon to come home' (**Ezekiel 36:8 Amplified**).

And again from Ezekiel, 'For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land' (**Ezekiel 36:24 Amplified**).

Ezekiel then foretells the spiritual regeneration of the people at some point *after* they are restored as a nation. when he says, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes...' (**Ezekiel 36:25-27 Amplified**).

The parable of **Ezekiel 37** describes these same events in this sequence: first, the physical restoration as a nation in the land and then the spiritual rebirth of the people. Ezekiel explains the prophetic vision, indicating the dry bones as 'the whole house of Israel' hopelessly scattered throughout the nations of the world (**Ezekiel 37:11**). The bones coming together and sinews and flesh being put upon them is explained as meaning the regathering of the people into a physical restoration of a national existence in Palestine. Isn't it fascinating how graphic this physical analogy is?

Ezekiel's vision, however, goes beyond the purely physical. It says '...but there was no breath or spirit in them' (**Ezekiel 37:8 Amplified**). This indicates that the real spiritual life would come with the rebirth of the people after the restoration (p.48, 60-62).

He is correct in noting that there is both a physical restoration and a spiritual restoration of Israel and that these are end-time events. The gathering of Israel from all nations is not necessarily referring to the gathering of Jews to the land of Palestine before the Great Tribulation. Many verses make it clear that the Jews will go into captivity at the end-time and will be sold as slaves to nations around the world (**Jeremiah 30:1-9, Isaiah 5:1-20**).

He writes: "The bones coming together and sinews and flesh being put upon them is explained as meaning the regathering of the people into a physical restoration of a national existence in Palestine. Isn't it fascinating how graphic this physical analogy is?"

I would say that the reason that **Ezekiel 37** about the resurrection of bodies here is such a graphic analogy is that it is real and not just an analogy. I believe this is referring to the second resurrection to occur at the end of the millennium when "the rest of the dead" (**Revelation 20:5**) are raised else why go into such detail of the sinews and flesh coming together?

I will concede, though, that the placement of this, if referring to a post-millennial event, is out of sequence if Ezekiel is describing events in a chronological order from chapters 36 to 48. A chronological order of events, though, is quite rare in the prophetic books. Daniel and Revelation are mostly chronological and much of the latter chapters of Ezekiel is in chronological order. The analogy view of Hal Lindsey, I will concede, works better chronologically.

There are a couple of other passages which appear to apply to the restoration of the Jews in the land of Palestine before the Great Tribulation. In **Zephaniah 2:1-2** we read:

Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired. Before the decree bring forth, *before* the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD's anger come upon you.

This nation is undesirable as the Jews have been and they will be on the end of God's anger in the Day of the Lord (so not referring to God's church). This gathering is said to occur before the Day of the Lord not after. The next verses speak of Gaza being destroyed and in verse 7 it says "And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah". Later in the verse the context is after their end-time captivity, not before so this inheriting the coast by the remnant of the Jews is after Christ returns though the gathering in verses 1 and 2 clearly occurs before the Day of the Lord.

In **Isaiah 66:8-9** we read:

Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut *the womb*? saith thy God.

This passage appears to speak of Zion as a nation being born in a day which, in a sense, did occur when Israel was born as a nation in 1948.

Enough has been shown to confirm that there will be an end-time Temple of God which will see a repeat of the abomination of desolation. A pre-requisite of such an occurrence is a national presence of Jews in the Holy Land so this point that Hal Lindsey presents appears to be correct.

The Rapture

Hal Lindsey popularised the evangelical doctrine of the rapture which teaches that the resurrection would not occur at the visible return of Jesus Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation but would occur either 3 ½ or 7 years earlier before the Great Tribulation starts. This has even further been popularised with the fictional series of books (also made into movies) called "Left Behind" written by evangelical prophecy "guru" Tim LaHaye. The official Left Behind website (www.leftbehind.com) states:

"In one chaotic moment, millions of people around the world suddenly disappear leaving their clothes, wedding rings, eye glasses and shoes in crumpled piles. Mass confusion hits while vehicles suddenly unmanned veer out of control, fires erupt and hysteria breaks out as the living stare in disbelief and fear at the empty places where their loved ones were just seconds before. This is the rapture that God has planned as the first sign to begin the unraveling of the end of time."

Will such a strange situation actually happen? Is there a secret invisible coming of Christ years before the visible coming of Jesus Christ? Is the secret rapture of faithful Christians a myth or coming reality? Is it a Biblical teaching? Let's first look at the evidence presented by Hal Lindsey:

God's Word tells us that there will be one generation of believers who will never know death. These believers will be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation - before that period of the most ghastly pestilence, bloodshed, and starvation the world has ever known. Examine the prophecies of this mysterious happening - of the "Rapture." Here is the real hope for the Christian, the "blessed hope" for true believers (**Titus 2:13-15**)...

Christians sometimes have a theological debate about whether the Rapture occurs at the same time as the second coming of Christ or whether it takes place before the second coming, even before the Tribulation.

It is only fair to sincere Christians who differ about this time element for us to develop the reasons why we believe the Bible distinguishes between the Rapture and the second coming of Christ and why they do not occur simultaneously (p.138-142).

Here Hal is about to give his key points as to why he feels the Bible says the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are separate events several years apart. Let's look at each and compare them one by one with what the Bible says:

First, there is a great distinction between God's purpose for the nation of Israel and His purpose for the church, which is His main program today. The church is composed of both Gentiles and Jews. We are now living during the church age and the responsibility for evangelizing the world rests upon the church. We should reemphasize here that we are speaking of the true meaning of the church, which is the body of believers in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament evangelizing was the task of the Jew. Of course he seldom fulfilled that obligation, which is one of his great failures. But the Scriptures give a vast distinction between God's dealing with the church and that time of Tribulation which seems to be a resumption of God's dealing with Israel. During the Tribulation the spotlight is on the Jew - in the Book of Revelation the Jew is responsible for evangelizing the world again (**Revelation 7:1-4**) (p.142).

Revelation 7 does describe a sealing of 144 000 of each of the tribes of Israel after the first 6 seals before the 7 trumpets (comprising the seventh seal) are blown. Then follows a similar sealing of a great innumerable multitude. Both groups are sealed to be protected from the destruction to come with the 7 trumpets (over the final year before the second coming).

Who are the 144 000? Who are the great innumerable multitude? What is the distinction between the two. In all honesty, there is very little stated about them directly. Both groups are said to be righteous in **Revelation 7:14** and so have God's spirit, are a part of God's true church and receive protection from the plagues to come in this final year of the great tribulation.

The 144 000 are not physical Jews as the Jews descend from Judah, which is only one of the 12 tribes of Israel represented here. In his book "The 144 000" author Art Braidic makes an interesting case that the 144 000 are spiritual Israelites and not physical Israelites.

His first supporting proof of this is the fact that the order of tribes in **Revelation 7** is utterly unique in the Bible. They are not in birth order or any other order you find elsewhere for the physical tribes of Israel, either in past history or the millennial prophecies of Ezekiel where the physical tribes are given their millennial inheritance. His second supporting proof of this is in the names of the tribes. Art writes:

"The Almighty God inspired the names of the tribes of Israel in such a way that they tell a wonderful story of every true christian's struggle and ultimate triumph. Notice how a paragraph placing the meaning of these names in their order might read:

"I will praise the Lord (Judah) for He has looked on me (Reuben) and good fortune comes (Gad). Happy am I (Asher) because my wrestling (Naphtali) with God makes me forget (Manasseh) my trials. God hears me (Simeon) and has joined me (Levi) to Him. He has purchased me (Isaachar) and my Husband will dwell with me (Zebulon). God will add (Joseph) me to the Son of His right hand (Benjamin)" (p.67).

Perhaps this is why Dan is enigmatically missing in the listing. As to why the 144 000 are separated from the great innumerable (who are also converted members but go through *the*

tribulation) is a mystery that one cannot be dogmatic about due to a lack of direct information in the scriptures.

There are 12 x 12000 and the number 12 is significant in the Bible and generally thought of as the number of organisational beginnings so, in this end-time context, we may be talking about spiritual Israelites (church members) who's characteristics fit the temperant of each of the meanings of the tribes (even if not a descendant of that physical tribe). They may be the chosen ones for various governmental roles in the coming Kingdom of God. Possibilities have been put forward that the sum total of true converted members up to the time of the Great Tribulation or Christ's return may well be 144 000.

The innumerable multitude according to Hal's viewpoint would be those converted in the tribulation by the 144 000, not those converted before the tribulation. He concludes that ALL converted believers at the time of the rapture at the beginning of the tribulation will go up in the rapture. But is this true? Will those left behind at the time of such a rapture ALL be unbelievers? Let's notice what the Bible says about this in **Revelation 12:**

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with **the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

Notice carefully! This woman is protected from Satan's wrath on earth in the wilderness at this time when the Devil knows he has but a short time left. Her remnant are those "which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" – in other words, the true church of God!

This woman is the church in this New Testament age and she is protected ON EARTH IN THE WILDERNESS for 1260 days (the Great Tribulation). Satan tries his best to wipe the church out as it flees to the wilderness with a flood (term often used for armies) but God intervenes to allow her to make it to the wilderness where she is nourished for 1260 days.

Her remnant who don't go to this "place of safety" in the wilderness are then persecuted by Satan in his great anger and this remnant are not unbelievers but are also those which "keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ". Is this not very different from the scenario described by the supporters of the rapture on the subject of how God's church will be protected in the Tribulation?

Let's look at Hal's next point for supporting the rapture from the Bible:

Another reason why we support the idea that the Rapture and the second coming are separate events is that the second coming is said to be visible to the whole earth (**Revelation 1:7**). However, in the Rapture, only the Christians see Him - it's a mystery, a secret. When the living believers are taken out, the world is going to be mystified (p.142-143).

Do only Christians see Christ at the time of the rapture? Is it a mysterious, secret coming invisible to the world at large? Supporters of the rapture use **1 Thessalonians 4:15-17** which says:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Adventist writer Steve Wohlberg in his book "The Left Behind Deception" says this about this passage:

Left Behind describes this event as silent and secret, yet doesn't it seem rather loud and visible? **There is a shout, a voice, and a trumpet.** Have you ever heard of a silent trumpet? Some people have even called 1 Thessalonians 4:16 the noisiest verse in the Bible!

The Greek word translated "coming" when referring to the coming of the Lord at the time when Christians are caught up in the air with Christ here is "parousia"

This same Greek word is also used in a sizzling apocalyptic message given by Jesus Christ Himself in **Matthew 24**, so we need to take a look at it. On a certain momentous day, "And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of *thy coming*, and of *the end of the world*?'"**(Matthew 24:3, emphasis added)**. The Greek word there in verse 3 for "coming" is "parousia." The disciples associated this "coming," or "parousia," with "the end of the world," and they were anxious to know more about it...

Immediately after warning about tricky false prophets and deception, Jesus Christ said, "Wherefore if they say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. **For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [parousia] of the Son of man be**" (Matthew 24:26, 27, emphasis added).

Here Jesus draws a razor-sharp contrast between false views of His return and the truth. When it comes to false views, don't miss that little word "secret." Jesus plainly warned that people will mistakenly "say" His coming will be in "secret." In fact, based on the context, we discover that this will be one of those powerful delusions which only God's faithful elect will avoid. So how should we respond when people say Jesus' coming will be in secret? Christ's answer is stunning. Jesus said, "*Believe it not!*" Why? Because "as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Far from being a secret event, the return of Jesus Christ will be like the brilliant flashing of millions of lightning bolts blazing across the sky. Can you guess what awesome Greek word Matthew used for "coming" in verse 27? It is "*parousia*," and this mega-important word is the exact same word Paul used in **1 Thessalonians 4:15–17** in his description of that coming of Jesus at which believers will be raptured or "caught up"! (p.22-28).

There are some other points to note about **1 Thessalonians 4:17**. These verses speak of meeting Christ in the air and caught up in the clouds with Him. There is no mention of a trip to heaven afterwards.

The words "caught up" are translated from the Greek word "harpazo". When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin in the 4th century he used the Latin word rapture. Some say this word means to be taken up suddenly, without warning, to be in heaven with Jesus. The expression caught up suddenly can just as easily refer to the first resurrection at Christ's second coming and doesn't prove there is a pre-Tribulation rapture.

The Greek word for "meet" was used to describe meeting a dignitary and then escorting him back to a location. Suppose you have a friend who is returning today. You would probably meet him at the bus or rail station or at the airport, wherever he arrives. Then you return with him to your home. In the same way, it is only natural that we should meet Jesus and return with Him to this earth at the Mount of Olives by Jerusalem.

We should also note the context of the passage. In the verses before Paul introduces the first resurrection with these words:

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-15**).

Then after describing the resurrection Paul finishes the topic by saying in **verse 18**:

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Some people in the church at Thessalonica had died which brought sorrow to them. He said that we do not sorrow as those who do not have hope and then he speaks of the first resurrection where he says we will see those loved ones who died in the faith and they would not be at any disadvantage to us who might still be alive at the time and then he says to comfort one another with the sure hope of the first resurrection.

It has nothing to do with any rapture or has anything to do with being spared from the Great Tribulation.

Let's look at Hal's next point:

Furthermore, we are told when Christ comes at the second coming it is at the height of a global war. Everyone will know that this is the great war predicted by the prophets. There will be no doubt about it. But when Christ comes for the believers, it will not necessarily be at the time of a war (p.143).

The idea that "when Christ comes for the believers, it will not necessarily be at the time of a war" from what I gather (though not explicitly explained here) is from several verses which speak of the Day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night which is the main reason for stating that Jesus would come back secretly for His church first. Let's look at these verses:

1 Thessalonians 5:2: For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a **thief** in the night.

2 Peter 3:10: But the day of the Lord will come as a **thief** in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a **thief**. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Notice in the first two verses it refers to the Day of the Lord coming as a thief. In the third it says Christ comes a thief. The Day of the Lord can refer to the very day of Christ's coming but more commonly it is used for the last year of the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation is the time of Satan's wrath but the Day of the Lord is the time when God gets angry and takes vengeance. We find this in **Isaiah 34:8** where we read:

For *it is* the day of the LORD's vengeance, *and* the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.

How do we explain this SUDDEN coming as a thief in the night? Does this mean no one will know about it? Or will most just not believe it until it comes even though they have been told and warned?

Clyde Kilough in a sermon entitled "The Element of Surprise" makes these comments about this terminology when used prophetically in the Bible:

Notice verse **[Isaiah 30:]12:** Therefore, thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Because you despised this word, and trust in oppression and perversity, and rely on them,

therefore this iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly in an instant."

God is simply telling Israel, "You can accumulate sin. You can accumulate iniquity, and oppression, and perversity, and all of these things, and there may not be an instant punishment for it. And you can start living a way of life that doesn't mean that everything falls apart immediately, but it's going to build up a spiritual pressure. Sin builds up." And He says, "The way it's going to come about is like a breach — a bulge — in a wall, where there's so much pressure on a wall that when that breaking comes, it comes suddenly and in an instant." You might have seen the news about the dam breaking in Hawaii this week. All of a sudden — you know, the pressure builds for a long time — but when the breaking comes, He says that is what is going to take place. That is how it is going to be.

Go back to the Berlin Wall as an example. The Berlin Wall's breaking was not precipitated suddenly. The fall came suddenly. The whole world was captivated watching it on the news, but the events leading up to it did not happen suddenly. These things were building over a long period of time. There was one historian who wrote, "The fall of the wall began the day it was built. Only it took thirty years for it to be torn down." In other words, the seeds of destruction were built into the system, and there was going to be so much — in that case, oppression was part of it — perversity, that there was a backlash to it. And there was a struggle in the world political scene that eventually led to that wall being torn down. But it's also like the sins of a nation. Unrepented of, they can build for awhile. Life can go on. But when God calls for an accounting, the breaking comes suddenly...

People are caught off guard by the suddenness of unfolding events — even if they have been warned. When Christ returns, it's going to be a shock to the world. **Malachi 3, verse 1**, says, "The day of the LORD, whom you seek...." Do you *seek* the return of Christ? Do we in this room *seek* Christ's return. It says, "The LORD, whom you seek, will *suddenly* come to His temple." What does that mean? He will *suddenly* come. Well, we've been looking forward to that for two thousand years. But he says that it's going to be a sudden coming. It says, "Behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts"...

Now let's consider a little point to ponder for a few minutes. When you think about this suddenness, this whole concept of suddenness seems, in large part, to be a matter of perception, doesn't it? What do I mean by that? Well, we read the Old Testament examples there about trumpets blowing and being warned, yet people being shocked. Was *everybody* shocked at the events that took place when Israel and Judah fell? I don't think Jeremiah was...

Now you might think, "How in the world could we, of all people, be caught asleep?" There's several factors. I can think of four right off the bat — ignorance. Of course, we should not be ignorant. But you can understand how in an ignorant world, they'll be caught asleep. Deceit. Sometimes people are not ignorant, but they've been deceived about the knowledge that they do have. Skepticism is one. Apathy can be another. You can take any one of those by themselves, and they can set up someone to be shocked when God steps in...

Where does this sense of suddenness come in? Well, implicit in what Jesus is saying here is, that the human mind is very prone to being distracted. The human mind is very prone to being taken off task. And He's saying that we — His people — really need to take heed and watch, or we, too, could be stunned by the suddenness with which events will take place.

Moving on to Hal's next point regarding the rapture:

More proof - when Christ comes to earth for the second time we are told in **Matthew 25** that He will divide the believers from the unbelievers. Now if the Rapture were to take place at the same time as the second coming how could the believers and unbelievers be separated on earth? At the Rapture all the living believers will be caught up to join Him in the clouds.

Here is the chief reason why we believe the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation: the prophets have said that God will set up a Kingdom on earth over which the Messiah will rule. There will be mortal people in that kingdom. If the Rapture took place at the same time as the second coming, there would be no mortals left who would be believers; therefore, there would be no one to go into the Kingdom and repopulate the earth.

We need to understand that during the seven-year Tribulation there will be people who will become believers at that time. In spite of persecution as described in the previous chapter, they will survive this terrible period of history and will be taken by Christ to reign with Him for 1000 years. This is the Kingdom which is God's prelude to eternity (p.143).

We have already looked at **Revelation 12** proving that not everyone who is a believer is whisked away to be protected from the Great Tribulation. The point from the parable of the sheep and the goats in **Matthew 25** is that it is a parable illustrating a lesson rather than a factual, chronological discourse of events.

This period of judgment mentioned in **Matthew 25** is not all at the time of Christ's second coming since the punishment for the unbelievers of eternal punishment according to Revelation 20 occurs at the close of the millennium, not at the beginning.

Hal Lindsey also makes these comments to support the rapture:

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (**Revelation 13:6 NASB**).

This is interesting. Why would he "blaspheme" or "badmouth" those who will dwell in heaven? And who are the ones who dwell in heaven; why would he even bother with them? You and I are the ones who are going to dwell **in** heaven, if we are true believers in Jesus Christ. If we are gone from the earth at this period, which this writer believes the Scriptures prove, how is this fellow going to explain the fact that a few million "religious kooks" are missing? He will, of course, have to discredit the Christian belief, explain it away, or "blaspheme" it and the believers (p.110-111).

He makes quite an interesting point here but the verse is not definitive as to who these that dwell in heaven are. It can just as easily be referring to God the Father and Jesus Christ. In **2 Thessalonians 2:3** we read:

Let not anyone deceive you by any means. For *that Day shall not come* unless there first comes a falling away, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition,

Tim LaHaye in his book "Charting the End Times" says the following on this verse:

Bible scholars have debated the exact meaning of the term "falling away" which is how the term is translated in the King James Version of the Bible. The Greek word

“apostesia” can refer to a physical departure. But what kind of departure is it? Interestingly, before the King James Version was written, there were seven different English translations of the Bible that agreed with the translation “departing first” and “falling away”. These seven English translations were written between 1384 and 1608. In other words, the idea of a departure could actually refer to the Rapture. Not until the King James was published in 1611 was the original Greek text translated “falling away” (p.38-39).

Assuming the Greek can be translated either way what did Paul mean when he wrote it – an apostasy or a rapture? The time frame is at or before the beginning of the Tribulation and before the man of sin (false prophet) comes on the scene.

An apostasy, the likes of which we have never seen before, did occur in the Church of God several years after the death of Herbert W. Armstrong. The incredibly radical change of doctrinal beliefs was so great that it even was headlined in mainstream Christian publications like Christianity Today. This apostasy has been an exact match of the kind of apostasy Paul was referring to.

For those who believe that the seven letters to the churches in the Book of Revelation represent seven church eras from the time of the apostles to the second coming it is clear from the sharp contrast of the second last church being greatly on fire (which is told it would be protected from the trial to come upon the whole world – **Revelation 3:10**) to the last church being pitifully lukewarm that some great apostasy would have to take place to bring about that condition.

In his book (in a Bible study format) “Charting the End Times” in Lesson 23 entitled “The Two Phases of His Coming” Tim LaHaye goes to some effort to try and make out that there are stark differences between a supposed first phase of Christ’s coming (rapture) and the visible second coming of Jesus Christ. He states:

There’s no doubt that there are two phases, for there are multiple passages that describe both. This is not a matter of having two or three irreconcilable verses that need to be adjusted so that they fit the other verses. The differences are **stark** enough that we cannot help but come to the conclusion that we are talking about two different events (p.115).

Are they really stark? He quotes about two dozen verses for the student to look up that refer not to the second coming but to the rapture. I looked up every one and every one can just as easily refer to the second coming at the end of the Great Tribulation. The only verse he quoted that has any weight in implying a separate event is **John 14:2-3** which says:

In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, so that where I am, you may be also.

The first question we have to ask is what is the Father’s house? **Revelation 21 and 22** speaks of the New Jerusalem that is being prepared and comes down from heaven to earth at the end of the millennium. This appears to be speaking of the New Jerusalem and a place we will have in it at the end of the millennium, not some place we will go to and be spared from the Great Tribulation.

This is also a bridal analogy. In Jewish a typical Jewish housing complex is called an insula which is essentially a group of houses or, more accurately, a group of units built around a central courtyard. What would happen when a man married a girl generally they wouldn't go off to some different location from their parents. They would build another house attached to the house of the man's parents.

A man would pick out a bride. He would then negotiate a bride price with the bride's father. They would exchange a glass of wine to seal the deal and then the man would go to His father's place and build a new house or unit next to his father's place. This might take many months. The bride would have no idea how long it would take or when the bridegroom would come back for her. Jesus deeply loves His bride-to-be, the church, and is eagerly looking forward to coming back for her. One day we'll be all together with Christ and the Father in the courtyard of His insula - the New Jerusalem.

There is only other apparent difference that have any weight in the rest of that section in his book is the apparent contrast between **1 Thessalonians 4:17** where we meet Christ in the clouds in the air and **Revelation 19** where we read about the Marriage of the Lamb and the church followed by Christ's return to rule the earth.

In describing the post-Tribulation resurrection view Tim LaHaye says:

Those who are raptured will go up to the sky, then come right back down, allowing no time for the judgment of believers' works and the Marriage of the Lamb (p.111).

This is indeed an apparent weakness of the orthodox Church of God point of view of no rapture and the resurrection occurring at the visible return of Jesus Christ but only an apparent one and we will look shortly at how this can be reconciled.

Firstly, though, we need to look at when the Bible says that the Marriage of the Lamb will occur. There is one point we need to keep in mind about the seventh trumpet. The seventh trumpet opens up the seven last plagues so that WHOLE time period of the seven last plagues is effectively the seventh trumpet. The audible sounding of the seventh trumpet can happen at ANY time during the seven last plagues - beginning or even at the end (or CLIMAX) of them.

Fred Coulter of the Christian Biblical Church of God believes that the first resurrection up to an orbiting sea of glass (**Revelation 15:1-2**) will occur on Pentecost at the beginning of the seventh trumpet several months before the visible return of Christ at Trumpets. It's a slightly modified version of the rapture as believed by evangelicals.

Right before the Marriage of the Lamb in **Revelation 19:7-9** we read in **verse 2**:

For true and righteous *are* His judgments. For He has **judged** the great harlot who defiled the earth with her fornication, and He has avenged the blood of His servants out of her hand.

It is with the seven last plagues, in particular the last one with the great almighty earthquake, that God judges Babylon and the great harlot that rode the beast. If we are to take **Revelation 19** in chronological order then the Marriage of the Lamb (and presumably the first resurrection) does not occur until after the seven last plagues.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 says that at the first resurrection we “shall be caught up together with them in *the* clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” When we are resurrected we meet Him in the air in the CLOUDS, not somewhere above the atmosphere and nothing is said about then going to heaven.

In Matthew 24:30-31 we read:

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

In this verse we see Christ coming in great glory (His visible return NOT invisible coming to resurrect His saints) and only after that it says He will send His angels at the sound of a great trumpet (seventh trumpet presumably) to gather the elect from all over the place presumably to be resurrected.

Let's come back to the point of the apparent lack of time between the resurrection and Christ's coming leaving no time for the Marriage of the Lamb.

According to the orthodox Church of God point of view when we are resurrected we are thrust into the middle of a war with Christ against the nations in Jerusalem immediately without seemingly so much as a hi, how are you and some time for orientation.

Fred Coulter's theory gives time for the wedding supper up in earth's orbit and getting to know each other before taking on the nations in Jerusalem.

Roy Holloday in a sermon on what it is like to be a God being went into a very detailed analogy, based on a computer's ability through the method of time sharing, to show how God can hear and answer so many people's prayers at the same time. Many computers these days can do some 300 million instructions a second making thousands of passes of thousands of users and still have time to spare. If our computers can do that how much more can the God, who knows all the 400 billion billion plus stars by name, do? And to think, not long from now, we'll have that same ability.

He also explained it another way. When someone is in danger and need God to speedily intervene there could be a whole involved discussion between the Father, the Son and the 24 elders and whether or not to intervene and have someone dispatched to intervene in the situation, all in a mere fraction of a second. It's just almost impossible to comprehend what it will be like to be on the God plane of existence.

As spirit beings we can do a million things in the blink of an eye. Time as we perceive it at our mortal speed will not be any restriction then and so the “lack of time” from our mortal point of view is not necessarily any problem here with the resurrection occurring at the same time as Christ's visible second coming.

Tim LaHaye in his book “Charting the End Times” says the following:

The fact that both **Matthew 24:42 and 44** assert it's impossible to know the time of Christ's coming tells us that there are no clues by which we can calculate the timing of His appearance. If the Rapture were to happen at the end of the Tribulation then

Matthew 24:42, 44 would no longer be true, for all we need to know is the time the Tribulation began, and we would be able to calculate the date of Christ's return seven years later. But if the Rapture happens at the beginning of the Tribulation, then we truly would have no way of knowing the timing (p.112).

Let's look at context to see which event no man will know the day in **Matthew 24:30-36**:

And then the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens. And then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory.

And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of *the* heavens to the other.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is still tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer *is* near. So you, likewise, when you see all these things, shall know that it is near, *at* the doors. Truly I say to you, This generation shall not pass until all these things are fulfilled. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.

But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not the angels of Heaven, but only My Father.

It is the time of Christ's second coming in power and great glory – His visible return (verse 30) which Christ said no man will know the day or hour (verse 36), not a rapture. Before the Tribulation begins no man will know the day or the hour but once the Tribulation we begin the 3 ½ year countdown to Christ's coming.

One of the other chief verses quoted to support the rapture is the passage in **Matthew 24:40** where it speaks of one being taken and one left behind. Let's look at the verse in its context:

But as the days of Noah *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Notice how this event is compared with the Flood. Steve Wohlberg writes:

Jesus basically said, "It will be just like Noah's day" (**verses 37–39**). Now think about it. Did Noah and his family vanish before the flood? No, they walked visibly into the ark. And what about those who were *left behind* after the door of the ark was shut? Did they have a second chance? No again. How were they left? *They were left dead; they did not escape.*

After saying, "the flood came, and took them all away," Jesus made His power-packed point, "so shall also the coming ["parousia"] of the Son of man be" (**verse 39**). And then, without a break, Christ said, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left" (**verse 40**) (The Left Behind Deception, p.30-31).

The context is the return of Jesus Christ and the day of the first resurrection which some will have made themselves spiritually and others will have not. When is the first resurrection? When will the dead in Christ rise to meet Him in the air along with we who are alive at His coming? Is it at the beginning of the Great Tribulation or at His visible second coming.

Let's look at how Paul answers the question in **1 Corinthians 15**:

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Paul plainly says that the resurrection occurs at the last trump or last trumpet! If it is the last that means there is more than one. Hal Lindsay explains this last trumpet this way:

This will take place "at the last trumpet," which refers to something which was the practice of God in the Old Testament. When the Israelites were on their march from Egypt over to the land of Palestine, every morning before they started on their journey they would have seven trumpets blow - to prepare to break camp, fold up their tents, etc. When the seventh trumpet, which was the last trumpet, sounded, this meant - move out! The idea in this passage is that when God has the last trumpet blow it means He will move out all the Christians - and at that point we shall be changed (p.140-141).

In his book "Charting the End Times" Tim LaHaye in speaking about the rapture says:

We will also hear the trumpet call of God (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**), the last trumpet for the church. (Don't confuse this with the seventh trumpet of judgment upon the world during the Tribulation in **Revelation 11:15**) (p.46).

He never goes on to explain why it is not to be confused and supposedly refers to a different last of a set of trumpets while the very verse that he quoted in saying that proves that the last trumpet of **1 Corinthians 15**, when the resurrection occurs, is the seventh trumpet of judgment on the world.

Are there a series of trumpets that blow at the beginning of the Great Tribulation when a Rapture occurs. There is no mention of a series of trumpets at the beginning of the Tribulation – only a series of seven trumpets during the Day of the Lord. According to **Revelation 11:15-18** it is at the last of these seven trumpets that Christ returns and rewards the saints at the resurrection:

And the seventh angel sounded [the seventh trumpet]; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, **and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints**, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

The giving of the reward unto the prophets and the saints is indeed the resurrection and that resurrection is to occur at the seventh trumpet at the END, not the beginning of the Tribulation!

Surely is this not the LAST trumpet that Paul was referring to when he spoke of the resurrection of the saints?

Despite what evangelical christians passionately believe in we have not seen any clear evidence in the Bible of a rapture where the second coming of Christ is split into two phases.

Europe Unites (the Beast) supported by a New-Age World Religion (False Prophet)

Hal Lindsey believes that there will be an end-time revival of the Roman Empire in the form of a United Europe. Its leader, according to Hal, is known in the Bible as the beast and the antichrist and that working hand-in-hand with him is a great religious leader known as the false leader. There will a new age one world religion that will be led by this false prophet who will be a Jew and be a master of black magic performing great miracles including healing the beast leader from a mortal wound.

Let's look at these points one by one related to great end-time power. Will there be an end-time revival of the Roman Empire in the form of a United Europe? Here is Hal's interpretation of the prophecies relating to this:

"And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion" (**Revelation 13:2** NASB).

To understand the meaning of this zoo which is described in Revelation, we go back to the predictive ministry of Daniel. As we studied in the previous chapter, Daniel describes his vision of four great beasts who come up out of the sea in succession. These beasts are the great Gentile empires which would rule the world. Daniel described these kingdoms using figurative expressions of wild animals.

Daniel 8 tells who the first, second, and third empires are; thus we can identify the animal figure by the order of the kingdoms. The first one of these empires which Daniel described was like a lion, which was the Babylonian empire. He said the second great kingdom was like a bear, which was the Media-Persian empire. The third kingdom would be like a leopard, and this was the Greek empire.

Then Daniel said there would arise a fourth kingdom, which would take over what was left of the Greek empire. That was Rome.

In **Daniel 7:23, 24**, Daniel predicts the fourth kingdom and especially the person who would put it together. He says that the fourth kingdom (Rome) shall "devour the whole earth."

However, we saw in "Rome on the Revival Road" that there is a "phase 2" to the Roman Empire. Daniel says that out of the culture of the first Roman Empire ten kings shall arise, and another king after that who is different from the ten. This king is going to subdue three of the kings.

In other words, when this Roman dictator comes, he is going to take over the ten-nation confederacy. Seven of the kings or leaders will willingly give him their allegiance, but , three of them will not. So he will overthrow these three leaders.

Now we are able to see how Scripture fits together. If you return to **Revelation 13** and look again at verse one you will understand that the "ten horns" refer to this ten-nation confederacy and the "seven heads" are the seven leaders who form a coalition with the Antichrist...

The fact that this woman, who is the Mystery, Babylon, is riding upon this beast shows that she controls him. Historically this "religion" has controlled many empires.

Notice what John the Apostle, writing in about A.D. 95, says about these empires which the "woman" has controlled: "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while" (**Revelation 17:9, 10** NASB).

We must look at this from the apostle John's perspective. He speaks of seven kingdoms, five of which have fallen. We must examine what five kingdoms over which this mystery religion of Babylon exerted authority have fallen. The first great kingdom where the Babylonian religion had great sway was the Chaldean.

The second world power which was virtually controlled by this religion was Egypt. The great Egyptian pyramids had astrological significance, as well as being a burial place for the kings, and the sphinx is the key to where the earth starts in the twelve sections of the Zodiac...

The next great world kingdom to be controlled by the mystery religion was, of course, Babylon itself under the great Babylonian rulers. The fourth kingdom was the Media-Persian empire, and the fifth was the Greek empire.

John says that "five have fallen, one is." The kingdom which was present at the time John wrote this was Rome. The mystery religion of Babylon was in Rome, exerting its great influence over the decisions of the empire.

The other kingdom which "has not yet come" is referring to the revived Roman Empire. The Antichrist will come up out of the culture of the ancient Roman Empire (p.104-105, p.123-124).

The two books in the Bible that give us the framework of Bible prophecy in a mostly chronological format are Daniel and Revelation. The Bible really does interpret its own symbols so let's look at the symbols in these books relating to this subject.

In **Daniel 2** we read about a great dream that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had that Daniel interpreted for him. God had given a vision about the great empires to come right up until the return of Jesus Christ. It was a prophecy of four great kingdoms to rule the ancient world. Daniel explained the meaning of his dream this way:



You, O king, *are* a king of kings...you *are* this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others (**Daniel 2:36-40**).

In **Daniel 7** we read that Daniel also had a dream of these four great kingdoms but instead of seeing a statue of a man made of gold, silver, bronze and iron like Nebuchadnezzar did, he saw four wild beasts – a lion, a bear, a leopard with four heads and a wild beast more terrible than the other three.



These four great ancient empires are plainly identified from history as -:

- 1] The Babylonian Empire (625 – 539 BC)
- 2] The Medo-Persian Empire (539 - 330 BC)
- 3] The Greco-Macedonian or Greek Empire (333 – 31 BC)
- 4] The Roman Empire (31 BC – 476 AD)

In **Revelation 13** we read about a beast that is a combination of the four wild animals in **Daniel 7**. The Apostle John in his vision wrote:

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having **seven heads and ten horns**, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority” (**Revelation 13:1-2**).



If we count up the number of heads and horns of the four wild beasts of Daniel 7 we come up with seven heads (remembering the leopard has four heads) and ten horns – the same number of heads and horns of the beast of **Revelation 13**.

The first three wild animals of **Daniel 7** were a lion, bear and a leopard and the beast of Revelation has the mouth of a lion, the feet of a bear and is like a leopard. It is obvious from these facts that the beast of Revelation 13 is a composite of the four great empires pictured by the four wild beasts of **Daniel 7**. (The Bible often uses animals as symbols for nations as

we do today. eg. America – an eagle, Russia – a bear, etc). Herbert W. Armstrong wrote that the Roman Empire:

...absorbed all the others, occupied all their territory, was greater and stronger than all. It included all the royal splendor of ancient Babylon, thus having the head -- the strongest part -- of the lion. It had all the massiveness and numerically powerful army of the Persian Empire -- symbolized by the legs, the most powerful part of the bear. It was the greatest war-making machine the world had ever seen, and it also possessed the swiftness, the cunning, the cruelty of Alexander's army, symbolized by the leopard (Who and What is the Prophetic Beast, p.8).

Now the Roman Empire fell in 476 AD and yet this great beast is prophesied to dominate the world and make war in the Great Tribulation to occur in our day leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. How do we explain this? In **Daniel 2:40-44** we read:

And the fourth kingdom [the Roman Empire] shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others...as the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile...

And in the days of these kings [pictured by the ten toes] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [the stone cut without hands that smashed the toes and then the rest of the great image] which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

The two legs of iron symbolize the Western and Eastern divisions of the Roman Empire. The ten toes are an extension or revival of the Roman Empire (a United Europe) that will exist at the time that Jesus Christ returns and sets up the Kingdom of God on earth.

Another point that will help us understand these prophecies about the beast is that the term "king" and "kingdom" are used interchangeably to refer to both the kingdom and the ruler or king over that kingdom. The head of gold represented both the kingdom of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar who ruled that kingdom (**Daniel 2:36-37**). The end-time beast is not only a revival of the Roman Empire but also is a term used to refer to the Hitler-like ruler who will rule this United European power. **Revelation 19:20** talks about how when Christ returns that the beast and false prophet will be captured and cast into the lake of fire.

In **Revelation 17** we read of another beast. The Apostle John in his vision wrote:

And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having **seven heads and ten horns**. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name *was* written: **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement...



The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits [Rome is known as the city of seven hills]. **There are also seven kings [or kingdoms]. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come.** And when he comes, he must continue a short time. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth (the original Roman Empire plus seven revivals), and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them” (**Revelation 17:3-6, 9-14**).

The ten horns represent the same thing as the ten toes of **Daniel 2** – ten rulers and/or nations that give their power to a great end-time ruler over the final revival of the Roman Empire that will be based in Europe. They will make war with Jesus Christ at His return and be defeated by Him.

But what of the seven heads of the beast of **Revelation 17**? The seven heads are seven kingdoms and it is said of those that “five have fallen, one is and one is yet to come.”

This means that they are seven successive kingdoms but which seven kingdoms. According to Hal Lindsey they are the old Babylonian kingdom (of the Tower of Babel), Egypt, the neo-Babylonian empire of Nebuchadnezzar, Persia, Greece, Rome (that one that is) and an end-time Roman revival (one to come). Is this true? Are these the seven kingdoms represented by the seven heads?

These seven heads (seven kingdoms) are controlled by the fallen woman which rides her. A correct identification of this fallen woman will lead us to a correct understanding of the seven kingdoms mentioned here.

Who is this fallen woman? According to Hal Lindsey this woman, named Mystery Babylonian the Great, Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, is a Babylonian religion that is the New Age movement that is rapidly grown in popularity (now even being pushed by Oprah Winfrey). But is this fallen woman the New Age movement that has similarities with the ancient Babylonian mystery religion? Let us notice one of her distinguishing features:

And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (**Revelation 17:6**).

While this may be just referring to the future historically the Church that has caused the martyrdom of more saints of God than any other is the great false church that has controlled the many revivals of the Roman Empire from her headquarters in the seven-hilled city of Rome. No new age church has ruled from Rome nor could given the powerful influence of the Catholic Church in that city.

A woman is a symbol of a church (**2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7, Ephesians 5:22-27**) and this is a great false church who rides or controls this beast. The Catholic Church has dominated all the revivals of the Roman Empire since the Imperial Restoration of Justinian in 554 AD. She is a mother church and the Catholics have spawned many daughter churches and false doctrines. Many of the core teachings of mainstream christianity including the two major festivals of Christmas and Easter which are never mentioned or sanctioned in the

Bible can be traced all the way back to Babylon. Easter itself is another form of the great Babylonian mother goddess Ishtar.

We know that the ten horns of the beast of **Revelation 17** are the ten kings or nations that shall form the last revival of the Roman Empire. **Daniel 7** isn't quite so clear about what the ten horns are on the fourth wild beast that was more terrible than the other three (Babylon, Persia and Greece). By comparing the facts of history with the clues given in **Daniel 7** about the little horn that came up amongst the ten horns we have strong evidence that these ten horns are ten successive revivals of the original Roman Empire.

I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots...Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words... The ten horns *are* ten kings *who* shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first *ones*, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law (**Daniel 7:8, 19-20, 24-25**).

Comparing these verses against **Revelation 17** it is easy to see that this little horn is the false church – the great harlot who persecuted God's people. It talks about this little horn intending to change times and law. This it did by changing from the Sabbath to worshipping on Sunday.

The little horn subdued the first three of the ten kings / kingdoms. Before the Imperial Restoration in 554 AD there were three foreign barbarian kingdoms that ruled Rome – the Vandals, the Heruli and the Ostrogoths. These three foreign barbarian kingdoms believed in a form of Arianism which differed from the Catholic Church's view of God as a trinity. Because of this difference of belief they were successively driven out of Rome at the behest of the papacy. After those three barbarian kingdoms there have been six more so far with one yet to come.

The six revivals controlled by the Catholic Church include Justinian's Byzantine empire, Charlemagne's empire, the Holy Roman Empire from Otto the Great, the Hapsburg dynasty, Napoleon's European empire and the Axis powers under Hitler and Mussolini. One is yet to come and is already in the process of forming with the developments we are seeing with the European Union.

The vision that John had in the Book of Revelation does jump back and forth in time. If the above interpretation is correct then the "one that is" at the place in time John was at in this vision would have been the time of World War II at the time of the Axis Powers of Hitler and Mussolini. It just happened to be that point in time that Herbert Armstrong came to the understanding of the Book of Revelation including the identifications above. Was this time that John was at in vision a reference to the time of the unsealing of the end-time prophecies mentioned in **Daniel 12:4**?

The best piece of evidence Hal gives to support His view that the Babylonian religious system is some New Age world religion as opposed to the Catholic Church is the following:

One of the words here is extremely important - the word "sorceries." It comes from the Greek word *pharmakeia*, which is the word from which we get our English word,

pharmacy. It means a kind of occult worship or black magic, associated with the use of drugs. This word is mentioned several times in the Book of Revelation. It is said of the great religious system that "all the nations were deceived by your sorcery" (**Revelation 17:23**) (p.125).

Sorcery and drug use are not really associated with the Catholic Church but this may be spiritual rather than physical in the same way she makes the nations "drunk with the wine of her fornication" in **Revelation 17:2**.

Here are some other interpretations of Hal Lindsey regarding the false prophet and the image of the beast:

We are told in **Revelation 13:3** that this great world leader will have a fatal head wound which will be miraculously healed. Many people have not known just what to make of this statement. Some have thought that what this means is that one of the empires of the ancient Roman Empire would be miraculously revived and brought back to existence. That is one possible interpretation. However, I do not believe that is the right interpretation. Here is why.

Look for a moment at **Revelation 13:14**. This is speaking of the False Prophet, who will be an associate of the Great Roman Dictator. The verse says: "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life" (NASB) .

Whoever this person is with this fatal wound will have a statue made of himself, and men are going to worship this idol. You do not make an idol of an empire. You make an idol of a person.

The way in which this dictator is going to step onto the stage of history will be dramatic. Overnight he will become the byword of the world. He is going to be distinguished as supernatural; this will be done by an act which will be a Satanic counterfeit of the resurrection. This writer does not believe it will be an actual resurrection, but it will be a situation in which this person has a mortal wound. Before he has actually lost life, however, he will be brought back from this critical wounded state. This is something which will cause tremendous amazement throughout the world...

In **Revelation 13:11-18** we are introduced to this infamous character. This person, who is called the second beast, is going to be a Jew. Many believe he will be from the tribe of Dan, which is one of the tribes of the original progenitors of the nation of Israel.

The False Prophet (he is called that in **Revelation 19:20 and 20:10**) will be a master of satanic magic. This future False Prophet is going to be a devilish John the Baptist. He will aid and glorify this Roman Dictator; he will proclaim him the savior of the world and make people worship him as God (p.107-108, 112).

Is the mortal wound where the beast leader gets a mortal wound and is healed by a false prophet. We are told that the false prophet does have supernatural powers from Satan in **2 Thessalonians 2:9** and **Revelation 13:13** so this idea is entirely possible. A couple of additional or alternate possibilities include the following. After the Western Roman Empire fell in 476 AD three barbarian kingdoms ruled Rome before Justinian, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, regained control of Rome in 554 AD in what became known as the Imperial Restoration. The deadly wound to the Roman Empire was thus healed. This deadly

wound could also be a great economic collapse such as what happened in 1930's when the Germans traded freedom from security and elected Hitler.

The second beast had 2 horns and was like a lamb but spoke like a dragon. Now a lamb is a symbol of Christ (**1 Corinthians 5:7**) and a dragon is a symbol of Satan (**Revelation 12:9**). This beast pretends to be christian but it is guided by the Devil. This second beast is the same great false church represented by the great harlot of **Revelation 17** who controlled the revivals of the Roman Empire and the little horn of **Daniel 7** who persecuted the saints of God (**Daniel 7:25**).



Will Durant writes the following showing how the Catholic Church structured itself in the pattern or image of the Roman Empire:

As Judea had given Christianity ethics, and Greece had given it theology, so now Rome gave it organization...The Roman gift was above all a vast framework of government, which, as secular authority failed, became the structure of ecclesiastical rule...The Roman Church followed in the footsteps of the Roman state (The Story of Civilization, vol.3, p.575, 618-619).

If one correct interpretation of the deadly wound was the fall of the Roman Empire then the image of the beast quite possibly was the governmental structure of the Roman Empire that the Catholic Church structured itself after following the fall of Rome. **Revelation 13:15** calls it an image of the beast, it doesn't use the word idol so image can apply to an organisation as opposed to a person. If the second beast is the great false church then it is unlikely they would condone worshipping a living political leader, maybe a dead saint but not a living politician.

About the idea that the false prophet is a Jew I could not find anywhere in the book where he gave any proof for that idea. If the second beast is the great false church then the false church is most likely the leader of this false church.

Israel's treaty with Europe and Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy

According to Hal the coming United Europe and Israel will make a covenant which Europe will later break 3 ½ years later when Europe triggers off the Great Tribulation to last 3 ½ years when it will be responsible for the abomination of desolation.

Jesus Christ predicted an event which would trigger a time of unparalleled catastrophe for the Jewish nation shortly before His second coming. This "abomination of desolation" or desecration of the inner sanctum of the Temple would occur at the midway point of God's last seven years of dealing with the Jewish people before setting up the long-awaited Kingdom of God (**Daniel 9:27**).

Daniel's prediction also indicates that a prince would rise up from among the people who destroyed the second Temple (who were the Romans in A.D. 70) and that he "would make a firm covenant" with the Jewish people. This treaty would guarantee the religious freedom to reinstitute the old "sacrifices and oblations" of the Law of Moses. This "prince" must be from a revived form of the ancient Roman Empire...

According to the Bible, the Middle East crisis will continue to escalate until it threatens the peace of the whole world. The focus of all nations will be upon this unsolvable and complex problem which keeps bringing the world to the precipice of a thermonuclear holocaust. This is apparently the first major problem that the incredible Roman leader will solve after taking over the ten-nation confederacy of European nations.

Some 2500 years ago the prophet Daniel said that a prince would come to power from the people who would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the second Temple (**Daniel 9:27**). The Romans under Titus did the destroying, so the coming prince would have to be someone out of the Roman culture.

This Roman prince, as we described in "The Future Fuehrer," will come to power just before the return of Christ. He will make "a strong covenant" with the Israelis, guaranteeing their safety and protection. The word translated "strong covenant" has the idea of a treaty or mutual protection pact. The Israelis will then be permitted to reinstitute the sacrifice and offering aspect of the law of Moses.

This demands that the Temple be rebuilt, because according to the law of Moses, sacrifices can be offered only in the Temple at Jerusalem. Apparently all this will be done under the protection of the Antichrist of Rome. (P.S. The Arabs are not going to like this idea of rebuilding the Temple one bit.)

According to Daniel's prophetic chronology, the minute the Israeli leader and the Roman leader sign this pact, God starts His great timepiece which has seven allotted years left on it. This event marks the beginning of the period of Biblical history previously noted as the Tribulation.

Isaiah prophetically expressed warning to the Jews concerning this covenant when he declared: "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter'; Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it" (**Isaiah 28:15, 18**).

It is through an ingenuous settlement of the Middle East problem that the Antichrist will make good his promise to bring peace to a world terrified of war. After this he will rapidly bring all nations under his control. The world will experience great hope and put its full trust in the genius of Rome. He will begin to bring in fantastic plans of economic prosperity, even to the underdeveloped countries. War will seem to be a curious game that men used to play. The world will be universally acclaiming the Dictator (p.56, 151-152).

There are two key passages that Hal uses to support this point are Daniel's famous 70 weeks prophecy in **Daniel 9** and also **Isaiah 28:15-18**. Let's first look at Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy which starts in **Daniel 9:24**:

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.

This is the purpose of the prophecy – to reveal the fate of Israel and Jerusalem and their eventual reconciliation with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This prophecy of 70

weeks, we will see, uses the day for a year principle of prophecy (**Ezekiel 4:6**). Continuing on with the 70 weeks prophecy:

Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (**Daniel 9:25-26**).

Seventy weeks is 490 days. If we use the day for a year principle we are looking at 490 years. 69 weeks is 483 years. Historically there 483 years between the commandment to restore Jerusalem unto the beginning of Christ's ministry.

The Messiah was cut off to pay not for His sins but for those of humanity. It then refers to the destruction of the city and the sanctuary (the Temple) by war at some later point which did occur in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

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 (**Daniel 9:27**).

The "he" who confirms the covenant with many for one week is not clearly specified here. There are two possibilities. It is referring to Christ or it is referring to "the people of the prince" who are responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem – the Romans.

Let's look firstly at the possibility that this is Christ who confirms the covenant. This explanation is provided at one website (<http://biblelight.net/dan927.htm>):

Some would claim that the "he" could not refer to Jesus since his ministry on earth was only 3 ½ years in length. They try to apply this to the antichrist (the prince who shall come in verse 26) and a 7 year peace treaty (covenant) with the Jews. Note the following:

(NIV) **Mat 26:28** This is my blood of the **covenant**, which is poured out **for many** for the forgiveness of sins.

(KJV) **Mark 10:45** For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and **to give his life a ransom for many**.

(NIV) **Mark 14:24** "This is my blood of the **covenant**, which is poured out **for many**," he said to them.

(KJV) **Rom 15:8** Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to **confirm the promises** made unto the fathers:

During this 70th week, the Gospel was preached only to the Jews to confirm the 70 week prophecy (**Matt 10:5, 6 and Acts 11:19**).

The event that ends the 70 weeks is the stoning of Stephen as found in **Acts 7:59**. At that point (**Acts 22:20-21**) the Gospel was no longer preached exclusively to the Jews. (See also **Acts 10:45, 11:18, 13:46, 14:27, 15:9, 18:6**). The Jews are no

longer the exclusively chosen people of God (**Gal 3:28**). See also the parable of **Mark 12:1** and **Luke 20:9**.

The original husbandmen (the Jews) of the vineyard are rejected, and replaced, never to tend the vineyard again. This does not mean they have been rejected as individuals. They can still be saved by faith in Jesus like anyone else. Promises made to the Jewish nation have been rejected by the Jews due to their unbelief, so the fulfillment of those promises will be made to those of faith, regardless of national origin (**Gal 3:29**).

So the final week of the 70 week period left to the Jews continues unbroken from the baptism of Jesus in 27 A.D. thru to 34 A.D., to confirm and fulfill (seal up) the prophecy of Daniel.

"and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,"

In the middle of the week [on a Wednesday], in 31 A.D., Jesus is crucified, bringing an end to the meaning of the temple sacrifices, which were a type (shadow) of his sacrifice at the cross. This is confirmed by the tearing of the veil in the Temple at the instant of his death, exposing the most holy place (**Mat 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45**). The fact that Temple ceremonies continued until 70 A.D. is irrelevant. There was no longer any meaning in what they were doing."

Another possibility that relates to Christ fulfilling this prophecy is that the second half of the final week when Christ would confirm the covenant will be after His second coming and that there is a "hiatus" or break between the first half and the second half of the week similar to the hiatus in **Daniel 11** where it suddenly skips forward nearly 2 000 years to the time of the end from **verse 40**.

After Jesus Christ's return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth the survivors of the tribes of Israel will experience even greater honor than they've previously known when God restores them and they truly will fulfill their destiny as a model nation to the rest of the world. First of all, God promises a major regathering of both Israel and Judah back to the land of Palestine.

After the verses describing the millennial scene of the lamb and the lion dwelling together in peace and the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth as the waters fill the sea (so not a reference to the Jews coming back to Palestine in the last 50 years) it then goes straight on to say in **Isaiah 11:11-12**:

It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left...He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

The Israelites in Moses' day did not go straight into the Promised Land. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. In **Ezekiel 20** we find that before entering Palestine God will first bring Israel into the wilderness and prepare them for entry into the Holy Land. God also says that He will purge out the rebels from Israel. Just as there was the rebellion of Korah during the first exodus there will be rebels this time around who God will purge from Israel. Ezekiel writes:

'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'Surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and

gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,' says the Lord GOD. 'I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD (**Ezekiel 20:32-38**).

At Mt Sinai God proposed the old covenant to ancient Israel. When God brings modern Israel into the wilderness for a time before they move into the Holy Land He will propose to them the new covenant which they will agree to. This time around Israel God will give them the Holy Spirit and they will have the heart to be able to live God's way and keep the terms of the new covenant which will be a great joy to God after the unfaithfulness of ancient Israel. This we read of **Jeremiah 31:31-33** (which is also quoted in **Hebrews 8:8-12**):

Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor and none his brother saying, 'Know the Lord' for all shall know me from the least of them to the greatest of them.

This preparation in the wilderness when Christ personally proposes the new covenant may last 3 ½ years if this is the second half of the final week of the 70 weeks prophecy. Christ preached about the new covenant (**Matthew 26:28**) during His ministry and was cut off in the middle of the week (3 ½ years later - also literally in the middle of the week – Wednesday, before the annual sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread in that year) when He was crucified, so for Him to PERSONALLY complete the confirming of the covenant for a week it seems quite possible that this may occur at the beginning of the millennium with the whole House of Israel.

With the no-hiatus view of Christ confirming the covenant Christ does it “impersonally” through the Holy Spirit and the apostles. The hiatus view of Christ confirming the covenant has the advantage of Christ doing it personally.

But what about the view of the covenant being made by the Romans? Let's look at the passage again:

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 (**Daniel 9:26-27**).

We know that the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. In the second half of the last verse we see that that he who confirms the covenant for one week is also the “he [that] shall make it desolate even unto the consummation”. Jesus Christ did not directly do this though it could be said that he indirectly did this by allowing the Romans to do this.

If it was the Romans who directly did this and we equate the “he” who confirms the covenant for a week with the Romans then we need to look at when this covenant for a prophetic week (7 years) is made.

We do know the Romans first surrounded Jerusalem with armies in 66 AD some 3 ½ years before its eventual destruction and then briefly pulled back (which allowed the Christians of the day to escape to Pella) before starting up their siege later on. The destruction of the Temple occurred in 70 AD and it was only then that the sacrifices stopped so the 1290 days for the abomination of desolation spoken of in **Daniel 12:11** does not fit here either.

The use of abomination and desolation we have seen is a technical term for the desecration of the Temple. If this doesn't apply to the 168 BC abomination and it doesn't fit for 70 AD if it is coupled with a covenant then it would have to be future.

If the “he” who confirms the covenant is also the prince of the Romans then it is likely this refers to the end time prince of the Romans (Europeans).

We have previously noted that prophecy is often dual and sometimes even has more than two applications so both Christ and the Romans could be the “he” who makes the covenant. It is hard to be dogmatic one way or the other and it is very possible both applications do apply to this prophecy.

Hal did quote another passage to support his view which I was unfamiliar with in relation to this topic and that was **Isaiah 28**:

Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves...

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it (**Isaiah 28:15, 18**).

The overflowing scourge sounds very much like armies invading and conquering Israel. God will allow Israel to be conquered and their covenant to protect themselves will be in vain. When is this prophecy meant for? The Good News Bible Reading Program has these comments:

In Isaiah's day, perhaps this applied to the nation's agreement with Egypt or Babylon to defend against Assyria. Yet, because some of this passage apparently refers to the end time as we've seen [such as **verse 22** speaking of destruction to the whole earth], the covenant with death may as well.

In that context, it could refer to an Israeli pact or treaty with Europe that may initially preserve the Jewish state—an agreement such as that made with Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century B.C. (see **Daniel 11:23**) and later with the Romans. None of these agreements has preserved the people of the Holy Land—and neither would any made in the end time.

It is quite possible that there is an end-time covenant between the Jews and the end-time Romans (United Europe).

King of the South is an Arab alliance that attacks Israel (Phase 1 of WWII)

The first act of World War III according to Hal Lindsey is an attack on Israel by an Arab alliance led by Egypt. He writes:

Long ago the prophet Daniel spoke of Egypt as "the king of the South." Egypt is identified as this power in chapter 11 where Daniel predicts a long span of history involving warfare between Egypt under the Ptolemaic dynasty and Syria under the Seleucid dynasty.

In **Daniel 11:40** Daniel leaps over a long era of time to the events which lead up to the personal, visible appearance of Christ as God's righteous conqueror. The phrase "at the time of the end" speaks unmistakably of the beginning of the last great war of history. Daniel gives great detail concerning the battles and movement of troops which will take place at the beginning of this war...

Our interest here is the revelation that Egypt will attack the revived state of Israel, which will then be under the control of a false Messiah. This man will probably be a Jew who works closely with the world dictator who will come to power in Rome.

Notice what Daniel says about this attack on Israel: "And at the time of the end the king of the south shall push at and attack him" (**Daniel 11:40 Amplified**) (p.77).

It is true that the King of the South is a power to the south of Jerusalem and most likely an alliance of Arab nations which includes Egypt and Libya which are noted as being conquered in a counterattack but does the King of the South attack Israel or some other power. Let's look at **Daniel 11** closely and see just who:

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

And at **the time of the end** shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps **(Daniel 11:36-43)**.

The whole of chapter 11 is about the struggles between the King of the North against the King of the South with Israel being the meat in the middle. Before the jump ahead to the time of the end the “he” that it refers to is the King of the North and commentators almost unanimously agree that verses 36 to 39 refer to the Roman Emperors and emperor worship.

Then it says “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push [or attack] at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind”. No mention whatsoever of Israel.

The King of the South attacks the King of the North NOT Israel. It says later that he shall enter **ALSO** the glorious land (Israel). Israel is not the primary target as far as a counterattack goes against the King of the South. It then mentions many countries including Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia who are invaded.

The United Church of God booklet “The Middle East in Bible Prophecy” has this to say about this prophecy:

What about the king of the South? To understand who that might be, we must first have some understanding of the history and thinking of the people in this region.

In Islamic thinking, the world is divided into two spheres, dar al-Islam, meaning “the land of Islam,” and dar al-harb, meaning “the land of the unbeliever” or “the land of struggle.” The Koran teaches that Allah “sent for His apostle [Muhammad] with guidance and the true faith, so that he may exalt it above all religions, much as the idolators may dislike it” (Surah 61:9, Dawood translation). A fundamental aspect of Islamic teaching is that Islam must eventually become the dominant religion of the entire world.

Remember also that the dream of the Arab peoples is for Arab unity. The warring tribes of Arabia were first united by Muhammad through a new religion, Islam. The Ummah, the community of Islam, has been a constant dream through the centuries. For 750 years now the sons of Ishmael have not been united. Only in the last 50 years have they even been independent of foreign control. The dream is still there, unfulfilled.

For a time, after the 1952 revolution in Egypt, President Nasser was the inspiration for Arab unity, and many thought he would bring it about. More recently Iraq’s Saddam Hussein thought the same way, desiring to unite the Arab world against the United States and Israel.

Going back further in time, Sudan’s Muhammad Ahmed Ibn el Sayed (1844-1885) proclaimed himself the Islamic messiah, the mahdi (“divinely guided one”) who would unite Muslims and defeat the infidels. He failed in his mission, but he had greater success at uniting Arabs than the secular leaders have had. We should also note that many Muslims believe that another mahdi is prophesied to appear in a tumultuous time to restore the Islamic faith and ensure its final victory over all other religions.

In more recent times Osama bin Laden became the spiritual successor of the Sudanese mahdi and found considerable success in uniting Muslims against the West. Wherever you go in the Islamic world, Bin Laden is the peoples' hero, giving them hope of a final triumph.

As Muhammad's followers brought about the defeat of the two great superpowers of his day, Byzantium and Persia, so Osama bin Laden and his followers have desired to bring down the two superpowers of our era. One, the Soviet Union, dissolved in 1991—its collapse due in large part to the Afghan rebels, led by Bin Laden, who defeated the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Sept. 11 showed how vulnerable the second superpower, the United States, is to terrorism. Repeated warnings from Washington have made it clear that the country remains susceptible to terrorist attacks potentially even more devastating than the first.

This end-time king of the South will rise up to defy the West, striking out against the king of the North. Whoever the end-time king of the South might be—whether a popular figure similar to Osama bin Laden, a political leader as were Gamal Abdel Nasser and Saddam Hussein, or a religious figure such as the Ayatollah Khomeini or the prophesied mahdi to come—someone will engage in this final conflict against the West—possibly in yet another attempt to bring about long-sought Arab and Islamic unity. He will unwittingly set in motion a cascade of events that will lead to unimaginable carnage before Jesus Christ intervenes to put a stop to it (p.29).

Returning to Daniel 11:40, we see that the forces of these two end-time leaders, the kings of the North and South, will clash: "At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over" (King James Version).

The word "push" is translated from the Hebrew word nagach, which can mean either "to push" or "to attack." It is used of a bull or ram attacking with its horns. Figuratively, this means "to war against." The form this "push" or "attack" may take isn't spelled out.

What is evident, however, is that this end-time leader from the south will attack the north in such a way as to warrant a major military invasion of the Middle East. Considering the ways Islamic extremists have attacked the Western powers in recent years, something like a series of major terror attacks against European targets could be the "push" referred to here. From this point on the king of the South is no longer specifically mentioned in Scripture. What happens to him isn't spelled out.

The same chapter shows that the king of the North, the European-centered Beast power, will be the victor, as he invades the Holy Land and overthrows "many countries" (**Daniel 11:41**). Among them are Egypt and the Libyans and Ethiopians.

Russia is the King of the North which conquers the Middle East (Phase 2 of WWII)

The next phase of World War III after the Arab attack on Israel according to Hal Lindsey is an attack on Israel and the Arab nations by Russia and her central Asian allies. He identifies Russia as the King of the North and also as the Gog and Magog of **Ezekiel 38 & 39**. Hal writes:

At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him (Israeli leader)" (**Daniel 11:40a**). We have identified the characters of this passage. The Arab-African confederacy headed by Egypt (King of the South) launches an invasion of Israel.

This fatal mistake spells their doom and begins the Armageddon campaign...but "the king of the north shall rush upon him (the Israeli leader) like a whirlwind, with chariots (mechanized army) and horsemen (cavalry), and with many ships" (**Daniel 11:40b**).

Russia and her allies use this occasion to launch an invasion of the Middle East, which Russia has longed to do since the Napoleonic wars. **Ezekiel 38** describes the development of this great Russian force, and its plan to attack Israel.

Twenty-six centuries ago Ezekiel described the plot of the Russian leaders against revived Israel: "Thus says the Lord GOD; On that day thoughts will come into your mind, and you will devise an evil scheme and say, 'I will go up against the land of unwallied villages; I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls (i.e. fortifications), and having no bars or gates'; to seize spoil and carry off plunder; to assail the waste places which are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have gotten cattle and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth" (**Ezekiel 38:10-12**).

The Russians will make a great tactical blunder by invading Israel. They will construe the defenseless posture of Israel, who will be trusting in the Antichrist's protection, as an opportunity to finally conquer the great land bridge of the Middle East. They will be motivated by the great material wealth of the restored nation of Israel. Their purpose is thus revealed by Ezekiel "...to seize spoil and carry off plunder"...

When the Russians invade the Middle East with amphibious and mechanized land forces, they will make a "blitzkrieg" type of offensive through the area. As Daniel saw it centuries ago: "...and he [Russians] shall come into countries [of the Middle-East] and shall overflow and pass through. He will come into the glorious land [Israel]. And tens of thousands shall fall" (**Daniel 11:40b, 41a**).

Ezekiel describes the same invasion as follows: "Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say to Gog [the Russian leader], Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, you will bestir yourself and come from your place out of the uttermost parts of the north [Daniel's king of the North], you and many peoples with you [i.e., the European iron curtain countries], all of them riding on horses, a great host, a mighty army; you will come up against my people Israel, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days, I will bring you against my land ..." (**Ezekiel 38:14-16**).

As previously quoted the Russians will make both an amphibious and land invasion of Israel. The current build-up of Russian ships in the Mediterranean serves as another significant sign of the possible nearness of Armageddon. They now have more ships in the Mediterranean than the United States, according to several recent news releases. The amphibious landings will facilitate a rapid encirclement of the middle section of "the land bridge."

The might of the Red Army is predicted. It will sweep over the Arab countries as well as Israel in a rapid assault over to Egypt to secure the entire land bridge. It is at this point that Russia double-crosses the United Arab Republic leader, Egypt. After sweeping over tens of thousands of people Daniel says of the Red army: "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries [i.e. Arab countries of the Middle East], and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He [Russian leader] shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans [African Arabs] and the Ethiopians [African blacks] shall follow in his train" (**Daniel 11:42, 43**).

As we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, this prediction indicates that the Russian bloc will double-cross the Arabs, Egyptians, and Africans, and for a short while conquer the Middle East...

The new State of Israel will be plagued by a certain pattern of events which has been clearly forecasted. Shortly after the restoration of the Jews in the land of Israel, an incredible enemy will arise to its "uttermost north." This enemy will be composed of one great nation which will gather around it a number of allies. It is this "Northern Confederacy" that is destined to plunge the world into its final great war which Christ will return to end...

Study **Ezekiel 38 and 39**. The most significant part of this chain of events is established here. These chapters indicate with certainty that after the physical restoration of the nation, but before the spiritual rebirth, the great northern enemy will invade Israel (**Ezekiel 38:8, 16**). Then God will supernaturally judge the northern invaders, and this is the very act which will impel the Israeli people to know and believe in their true Messiah, Jesus Christ (**Ezekiel 39:6-8**) ...

Ezekiel describes this northern commander as "Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince (or ruler) of Rosh, of Meshech and Tubal" (**Ezekiel 38:2 Amplified**). This gives the ethnic background of this commander and his people. In other words, the prophet gives the family tree of this northern commander so that we can trace the migrations of these tribes to the modern nation that we know.

Gog is the symbolic name of the nation's leader and Magog is his land. He is also the prince of the ancient people who were called Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. In the Biblical chapter commonly called the "Table of Nations" by scholars these names are mentioned (see **Genesis 10**). They are described as the grandsons of Noah through his son Japheth, with the exception of Rosh (**Genesis 10:1, 2**). Magog is the second son; Tubal is the fifth son; and Meshech is the sixth son.

Josephus, a Jewish historian of the first century, says that the people of his day known as the Moschevi and Thobelites were founded by Meshech and Tubal respectively. He said, "...Magog is called the Scythians by the Greeks." He, continued by saying that these people lived in the northern regions above the Caucasus mountains.

Pliny, a noted Roman writer of early Christian times, said, "Hierapolis, taken by the Scythians, was afterward called Magog." In this he shows that the dreaded barbaric people called the Scythians were identified with their ancient tribal name. Any good history book of ancient times traces the Scythians to be a principle part of the people who make up modern Russia.

Wilhelm Gesenius...say[s] that the Greek name, "Moschi," derived from the Hebrew name Meshech [and] is the source of the name for *the city of Moscow*. In discussing Tubal he said, "Tubal is the son of Rapheth, founder of the Tibereni, a people dwelling on the Black Sea to the west of the Moschi."

Gesenius concludes by saying that these people undoubtedly make up the modern Russian people. There is one more name to consider in this line of evidence. It is the Hebrew word, "Rosh," translated "chief" in **Ezekiel 38:2, 3** of the King James and Revised Standard Versions. The word literally means in Hebrew the "top" or "head" of something. According to most scholars, this word is used in the sense of a proper name, not as a descriptive noun qualifying the word "prince."

The German scholar, Dr. Keil, says after a careful grammatical analysis that it should be translated as a proper name, i.e., Rosh. He says, "The Byzantine and Arabic writers frequently mention a people called Ros and Rus, dwelling in the country of Taurus, and reckoned among the Scythian tribes."

Dr. Gesenius in his Hebrew Lexicon says, "...Rosh was a designation for the tribes then north of the Taurus Mountains, dwelling in the neighborhood of the Volga." He concluded that in this name and tribe we have the first historical trace of the Russ or Russian nation (p.153-158, 59-65).

There are few points that we need to look at here. The first is who is the King of the North? Is it Russia or some other power. The second is whether Russia is the Gog and Magog of **Ezekiel 38 and 39**. The third point is when does the attack on Israel by Gog and Magog and her other allies occur?

Let's look at the first point. Is Russia the King of the North or is the King of the North some other power?

Russia is certainly north of Israel geographically but the conclusion that Russia is the King of the North is disconnected from the historical context of the rest of **Daniel 11**.

The original King of the North was the Seleucid dynasty of the Greek Empire based in Syria which, in turn, was swallowed up by the Roman Empire that then became the King of the North and the Roman Emperors are the King of the North immediately prior to the shift to the end time in **verse 40**. The Russians have not acquired the former territory of the Roman empire.

It was the Germans who became known for the blitzkrieg style of attack we see in the following **verse 40**. As Hal himself points out the prophecy in **Isaiah 19** indicates that it will be Assyria (German-led Europe) who will be the hard taskmaster over Egypt in the end-time and Egypt is the one of the nations conquered in this attack on the King of the South.

It is the Russians who have been allies and arming many of the Arab nations. We have seen the King of the South attacks the King of the North, not Israel in **Daniel 11:40**. Why would the Arabs attack Russia? The Islamic Arabs and Catholic Europeans have been historical enemies since the Crusades and the terrorist campaigns are, in effect, a continuance of this clash of civilisations and religions. Much has also changed on the geopolitical scene in this world since the time that Hal wrote at the time of the Cold War when Russia was the big enemy to the Americans.

The abomination of desolation we have seen appears to occur 1290 days before the return of Christ and Hal is in agreement that the Europeans are the ones who cause the abomination of desolation then it means it occurs at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation.

If the Arabs attack Israel and then the Russians and only then Europe how long is that all going to take before the Europeans get a hold of Jerusalem and cause the abomination? That's hardly at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation if the Europeans are responsible for the abomination of desolation.

Historical context and the biblical clues we have seen lead to the conclusion that the King of the North is the end-time Roman revival, a coming United Europe.

Let's look at the second point. Is Russia the people of Gog and Magog of the **Ezekiel 38 and 39**?

First of all, I am in agreement with the other historical identifications of Rosh, Meschach and Tubal being the Russian people and most of the other identifications indicate peoples in central and south Asia.

So, what about Gog and Magog? Hal does have a fairly convincing quote from Josephus equating Magog with the Scythians and then equating them with the Russians. I'd like to quote from the Good News Bible Commentary which indicates a different and stronger possibility:

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus wrote: "Magog founded those that from him were named Magogites, but who by the Greeks were called Scythians" (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, chap. 6, sec. 2). The name *Scythians* denoted a wide array of peoples who ranged across the Russian Steppes all the way into China. (The Western Scythians were heavily Israelite and Germanic in nationality)

One researcher writes of the Eastern-ranging Scythians: "The Assyrians called them Mat Gugi (Ma-Gog) which means 'the country of Gog'.... Let Milner, famous for his writings on the Japhetic races, add further to our understanding: 'Magog, as a geographical term used by Hebrews of old and Arabs today (Majaj), denoted that vast stretch of country to the north of the Black Sea, Caucasus, Caspian Sea, Hindu Kush, and Altai, known to the Greek geographers as Skythia'....

"The term Mongol, sometimes written as Mongoul, appears to be directly derived from *Magog*. In India, for example, *Mongol* becomes *Moghul* and a large part of China was known as Mangi when Europeans first visited it. The Arabs called the Scythian tribes of Tartary *Yajuj and Majuj* which is Gog and Magog and the Great Wall of China as the 'wall of al Magog'....

"Where is Magog located today? They migrated via southern Russia to their current homeland, leaving behind such place-names as: Mogliev city, Mogiolistan, Mugojar Mountains, Mogol-Tau Mountains. Among the people of Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, central and much of northern and southern China...and even some Japanese are also descended from Magog. Here are the hundreds of millions of China today. No wonder the name of ancestor Japhet means 'expansion,' implying a large or expanding race. Other peoples descended from Magog [as well]" (Craig White, *In Search of...The Origin of Nations*, 2003, pp. 189-190, available at www.originofnations.org).

If we have established that not just the peoples of Russia and central Asia but also the peoples of China are also a part of that alliance then these peoples are not just north but both north and east of Israel and that fits in very well with the prophecy in **Daniel 11:44** about news out of the north and east troubling the King of the North which we'll come back to shortly.

The next point we need to look at is when does the attack on Israel in **Ezekiel 38 and 39** occur?

Based on that last conclusion **Ezekiel 38 and 39** might seem to fit at this juncture we are now at with **Daniel 11:44** but does it? **Ezekiel 38 and 39** describes an attack on Israel after they are regathered to Palestine.

We have demonstrated the King of South attacks the King of the North not Israel and that the King of the North is not to be found amongst the nations listed in **Ezekiel 38 and 39** but is the coming United Europe so **Ezekiel 38 and 39** doesn't fit a conquest after the Jews were gathered back to Palestine with the modern nation of Israel.

But it doesn't fit **Daniel 11:44** either does it? These nations are north and east but Israel has been conquered by the Europeans yet Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe a war against Israel not the Europeans and only after Israel has been regathered.

So when is time frame of **Ezekiel 38 and 39**? Craig White in his paper "When do the armies of **Ezekiel 38 & 39** invade Israel?" makes these comments on these chapters:

Evangelicals generally take a position that the prophecy refers to an attack upon the Jewish people prior to the return of Christ, during the Tribulation. The more considered commentaries, more logical and conservative in their outlook, take a position more-or less similar to that of the old WCG. Here are quotes from some of them:

1. New Bible Commentary:

"These two chapters are unique in OT prophecy in that they describe an uprising of foreign powers against the people of God after the commencement of the Messianic kingdom.

The prophecy has already predicted the coming blessedness of Israel (**33-37**); he now portrays the nation as long settled in their land and transformed into a prosperous community (**38:8,11, 12, 14**), a condition which, according to his earlier teaching, involves their prior repentance, regeneration and political revival (**33-37**).

Whereas he had said that Israel's restoration would come 'soon' (**36:8**), he says that Gog will be mustered 'after many days...in the latter years' (**38:8**). The motive underlying the prophecy is the necessity of earlier prophecies concerning the destruction of hostile Gentile powers being fulfilled (**38:17; 39:8**) and for the nations of the world to learn the power, holiness and sole deity of Yahweh (see **39:7**).

The author of the book of Revelation has both used these chapters to vivify his description of Armageddon prior to the millennium (**Rev. 19:17, 18**), and adapted their essential idea so as to make it a final rebellion of the godless of humanity at the end of the millennium, before the new creation (**20:7-9**).

In comparing the two writings it should be remembered that Ezekiel knew nothing of a new creation nor of a new Israel which was to inherit the kingdom; if John was to incorporate the prophecy he had of necessity to change its form. In conformity with his usage of OT prophecy generally, he has not hesitated to do so" (*New Bible Commentary*, "**38:1-39:29** Prophecy against Gog", pages 681-02) (emphasis mine)...

4. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia :

"Perhaps Ezekiel had in mind something of the eschatology of **Zec. 14**, in which the nations that represented "the ends of the earth" would rise against Jerusalem ...In Ezekiel **the invasion of Gog occurs during the messianic age**, while in Revelation it occurs just at the close of the millennium. In Ezekiel Gog and Magog are gathered by Yahweh for their destruction; in Revelation they are gathered by Satan. In both cases the number is vast, the destruction, by supernatural means, is complete and final" (vol 2, pages 519-20) (emphasis mine).

Why will the forces of **Ezekiel 38 & 39** invade the Holy Land?

These are the remnants of the forces of the Second Woe (**Rev 9:13-21**) which God would have used to conquer and punish the countries of the Beast power. Perhaps after the first seven years or so of Israelites being settled back in the Holy Land, after Israel has swooped upon certain gentiles, many of these peoples will rise up in rebellion, claiming discrimination, racism and so on as justifying this invasion.

Just as God gives us enough time to repent or show our true colours; just as He allowed Lucifer plenty of time to foment rebellion; so He will allow these forces to develop. The picture we get that these peoples are led by the forces that invaded the nations comprising the Beast power in Europe. As such, they comprise the remnants of the 200 million army pictured in **Rev 9:16** (the 1/6th of **Ezek 39:2** [KJV] may mean that 1/6th of the 200 million will come against Israel or that 1/6th of the Gog and Magog forces will be left).

The bitterness and jealousy will well-up into a lust for war. They shall see the great blessings and wealth of Israel returned to them and want it for themselves (see **Rev 18:11-13; Hag 2:7-9; Is 23:17-18; Ex 12:35-36; Jos 6:18-19**)...

And why does this war occur?:

Eze 39:21 And I will set My glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see My judgments which I have done, and My hand that I have laid on them.

Eze 39:22 So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* Jehovah their God from that day and forward. **[there will be no more doubting Thomas's]**

Eze 39:23 And the nations shall know that the house of Israel was exiled **[ie prior to this Gog and Magog invasion]** for their iniquity **[therefore the nations must now also not sin]**. Because they sinned against Me, therefore I hid My face from them and gave them into the hand of their enemies. So they all fell by the sword. **[it follows on therefore that these gentile nations will now be called to repent and allow God to rule over them through Israel].**

There is another invasion by Gog and Magog at the close of the millennium according to **Revelation 20:7-9**. The last verse quoted above clearly shows that **Ezekiel 38 and 39** is describing not this invasion (though similar) at the end of the millennium but another at the beginning of it. The early part of **Ezekiel 38** describes the invasion a little while after Israel is regathered to the land of Palestine as opposed to the end of the millennium.

Europe (News out of North) attack Russians in the Middle East (Phase 3 of WWII)

The next phase in World War III according to Hal is an attack on the Russians in the Middle East and their homeland by Europe. Hal sees this as the divine judgment on Russia that will involve nuclear weapons from both sides and that nations that are aligned to Europe (such as America) will feel the brunt of this nuclear battle. Hal writes:

As we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, this prediction indicates that the Russian bloc will double-cross the Arabs, Egyptians, and Africans, and for a short while conquer the Middle East. At this time, with the main Russian force in Egypt, the commander will hear alarming news: "But rumors from the east [the Orient mobilizing] and from the north [the Western Europeans mobilizing] shall alarm and hasten him. And he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to sweep away many" (**Daniel 11:44** Amplified).

As shown in Chart two, the Russian force will retrace its steps from Egypt to consolidate for a counter-attack in Israel. The Russians will be alarmed at the news of the Roman Dictator mobilizing forces around the world to put down this breach of peace...

This Russian double-cross of the Arabs is predictable by any astute observer of the Middle East situation today. It is obvious that the Russians are playing games with the Arabs in order to accomplish the old Russian dream of year-round seaports and oil supplies...

The Russian force will establish command headquarters on Mount Moriah or the Temple area in Jerusalem. Daniel pointed this out when he said: "And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the seas [Dead Sea and Mediterranean Sea] and the glorious holy mount Zion; yet he shall come to his end with none to help him" (**Daniel 11:45 Amplified**).

As the Russian commander confidently prepares to meet the forces of the revived Roman Empire in Palestine, he seeks to utterly destroy the Jewish people. This is the apparent meaning of **verses 44 and 45**. Perhaps no other great army of history has ever been so totally destroyed as this one will be.

Ezekiel sounded the fatal collapse of the Red Army centuries ago when inspired by the Spirit of the living God he said: "But on that day, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused. For in my jealousy and in my blazing wrath I declare, On that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the ground, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall quake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the cliffs shall fall, and every wall shall tumble to the ground. I will summon every kind of terror against Gog, says the Lord GOD; every man's sword will be against his brother. With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone" (**Ezekiel 38:18-22**).

". . . then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the people that are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the wild beasts to be devoured. You shall fall in the open field; for I have spoken, says the Lord GOD" (**Ezekiel 39:3-5**).

The description of torrents of fire and brimstone raining down upon the Red Army, coupled with an unprecedented shaking of the land of Israel could well be describing the use of tactical nuclear weapons against them by the Romans... God consigns this whole barbarous army, which will seek to annihilate the Jewish race, to an utter and complete decimation. Ezekiel speaks of the Russians and "...all your hosts and the peoples who are with you ..." being destroyed in Israel.

A fearful thing is predicted as occurring at the time of the Red Army's destruction. God says, "I will send fire on Magog [Russia] and upon those who dwell securely [false hope] in the coastlands [various continents] . . ." (**Ezekiel 39:6 Amplified**).

According to this, Russia, as well as many countries who thought they were secure under the Antichrist's protection, will have fire fall upon them. Once again, this could be a direct judgment from God, or God could allow the various countries to launch a nuclear exchange of ballistic missiles upon each other.

The United States may be aligned with the Western forces headed by the ten-nation Revived Roman Empire of Europe. It is clear that the U.S. cannot be the leader of the West in the future. It is quite possible that Ezekiel was referring to the U.S. in part when he said: "I will send fire - upon those who dwell securely in the coastlands"...

According to the prophetic outlook the United States will cease being the leader of the West and ; will probably become in some way a part of the new European sphere of power...We realize that the United States is not mentioned in the Bible. However, it is certain that the leadership of the West must shift to Rome, in its revived form, and if the U.S. is still around at that time, it will not be the power it now is (p.158-161, 95-96).

We have already identified the Chinese as part of the Asiatic alliance along with Russia mentioned in **Ezekiel 38 and 39** and also the King of the North as the United European power not Russia. If that is so, then logically the news out of the north and out of the east that troubles the King of the North refers to the Europeans being troubled by the military mobilisation of Russia (north) and China (east) and their allies. **Daniel 11:44** says:

But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

It appears from this verse that the King of the North (Europe) attacks first and the next verse implies there will be a counterattack where the Europeans will be overwhelmed along with their eventual destruction at the return of Christ.

What we see in **Revelation 9** with the fifth and sixth trumpet plagues are two great war offensives. The six trumpet plague refers to a great army of 200 million presumably involving China and other populous nations. It is highly likely that these war offensives of the fifth trumpet plagues are the same war offensives described in **Daniel 11:44-45** with the King of the North (Europe) attacking these combined Russian and Asiatic powers and then a great counterattack by the this combined Russian-Asiatic alliance.

While we have shown previously that **Ezekiel 38 and 39** refer to a battle that occurs in the beginning of the millennium after Israel has returned from its captivity in the Great Tribulation it is highly likely that the nations of the 200 million man army of **Revelation 9** are the same nations that are described in **Ezekiel 38 and 39**. As noted above "the 1/6th of **Ezekiel 39:2** may mean that 1/6th of the 200 million will come against Israel or that 1/6th of the Gog and Magog forces will be left."

Hal Lindsey says that the United States is not mentioned in the Bible and suspects the coastlands of **Ezekiel 38 and 39** refers to the United States. The story of the true identity of the American peoples as the descendants of Israel and the birthright tribe of Joseph along with the British is a fascinating story and a vital key to unlocking the prophecies of the Bible which have much to say about the fate of Israel in the end time. We will cover some of this in a later section. This is also discussed in great detail in the UCG booklet "The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy" and my booklet "The Time of Jacob's Trouble" (<http://www.rogerswebsite.com/articles.htm>).

Europeans and Chinese fight for world control at Armageddon (Phase 4 of WWIII)

The last phase of World War III according to Hal is that there will be a showdown in the land of Israel between the European and the Asian forces. Hal writes:

With the United Arab and African armies neutralized by the Russian invasion, and the consequent complete annihilation of the Russian forces and their homeland, we have only two great spheres of power left to fight the final climactic battle of Armageddon: the combined forces of the Western civilization united under the leadership of the Roman Dictator and the vast hordes of the Orient probably united under the Red Chinese war machine...

The apostle John predicts the mobilization of the oriental power as mentioned in Chapter 7. "And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east" (**Revelation 16:12** NASB). The Chinese, as previously discussed, will

be the most logical leader of this great army. They will use the chaos caused by this conflict in the Middle East to march against the Roman Dictator in a challenge for world control.

As this incredible Oriental army of 200 million soldiers marches to the eastern banks of the Euphrates, the Roman Dictator will begin to prepare his armies to meet them for the showdown in the Middle East. The apostle John predicts the supernatural power that the Antichrist and the False Prophet will use to gather all remaining nations together to confront the Oriental armies: "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon [Satan] and out of the mouth of the beast [Roman Dictator] and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for war of the great day of God, the Almighty. And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Armageddon" (**Revelation 16:13, 14, 16 NASB**).

Several things must be noted from this passage. First, this whole sequence of events constitutes the final judgments of God against the Christ-rejecting world. They are called in the Book of Revelation the seven bowl or vial judgments and they occur just before and during the visible return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Secondly, the passage shows that the Roman Dictator and his sensational religious cohort, the False Prophet, will speak a satanically originated message to the non-oriental world - a message energized with great demonic power. They will persuade the nations of the whole world (i.e. not aligned with China) that they should send armies to the land of Palestine to destroy the last great warlike force on earth. They will probably promise an age of everlasting peace after the troublesome communist forces of the Orient are destroyed.

Thirdly, the passage indicates that "leaders of the whole world" will send armies to the Middle East to fight under the Antichrist's command against "the kings of the east." Such countries as Western Europe, the United States, Canada, South America, and Australia undoubtedly will be represented. Fourthly, these armies will be assembled and deployed for battle in the place called "Armageddon" or "Harmageddon" (p.162-163).

Most of this is essentially correct with the exception of the Russian forces being already annihilated at this point and the U.S., Canada and Australia being involved. Russia will, more than likely be a part of the eastern alliance. The English-speaking nations (Israel) and Israel (the Jews are Judah) will have been made captive by the United European power (**Jeremiah 30:1-8**).

Prior to the final showdown in the land of Israel the sixth trumpet plague of **Revelation 9** indicates that the Asiatic alliance causes great destruction in a war that kills a third of the remainder of mankind at this point in time. This indicates that they will probably sweep across Europe in the great counterattack to the fifth trumpet plague. The end-time political-religious system of Europe called Babylon is destroyed in **Revelation 17 and 18** including the false church who will be turned on by the Europeans when everything falls apart

Armageddon is Hebrew for the hill of Megiddo in northern Israel where the forces of these two great power blocs (Europe and Asiatic alliance) gather. At this juncture in time Jesus Christ returns to earth and fights the forces that proceed against Him and destroys them. At the end of this great showdown Jesus Christ will set up the Kingdom of God on earth.