

Prophecy 12

The Eternal Gospel

Revelation 14:6-15:6

Beginning point in time: When the Censer is Cast Down (Revelation 8:5)

Ending point in time: 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation

Summary: The essence of this prophecy can be summarized in a few sentences. For 1,260 days, God will empower His Two Witnesses to speak through His 144,000 prophets. The 144,000 will proclaim three messages* to everyone on Earth. The first message will contain a demand, the second will contain an inflammatory declaration, and the third will contain an ultimatum. Circumstances will force everyone to respond to these messages and our response will determine our eternal destiny.

Introduction: This prophecy contains five elements which occur in chronological order. They are:

1. God sends an outright demand
2. God sends an inflammatory declaration
3. God sends an ultimatum
4. God's offer of salvation comes to an end
5. The victory celebration of the 144,000

Jesus will not expect human beings to embrace the testimony of the 144,000 on the basis of the miracle working powers which they will exhibit.¹ Instead, the testimony of the 144,000 will be vali-

***Note:** Actually, the 144,000 will present four messages from God during the Great Tribulation. Three messages are found in this prophecy and the fourth message is found in Prophecy 14. These four messages are easily understood. When the time comes for their delivery, those knowing very little or nothing about the Bible will be able to *validate* the testimony of the 144,000 from the Bible for themselves.

dated by God's Two Witnesses. If a person defies the testimony of God's Two Witnesses, that person commits the unpardonable sin. The issue of validation is important because the devil and his prophets will also work amazing miracles during the Great Tribulation. Miracle working powers will gain attention, but miracles do not necessarily validate the testimony of a person claiming to speak for God. By putting four messages in a plain, "thus saith the Lord" format in the book of Revelation, the essential elements for salvation will be easy for everyone to understand when the time comes. In addition to these plainly worded messages in Scripture, the Holy Spirit will strongly impress each heart with their importance and validity. The gospel of Jesus will be clear, unmistakable, simple, and obvious. If a person chooses to reject the clearest evidences of truth and the strongest influence that the Holy Spirit can exercise in that person's heart, God can do nothing else to save that person.

Redemption through Faith or Survival through Works?

The four messages presented by the 144,000 will add a dimension to the Great Tribulation that few people anticipate. Currently, millions of Christians believe a Great Tribulation is coming, but few understand the coming contest for souls; a contest between salvation through faith and survival through works. After the first four trumpets occur, everyone will question the possibility of survival. God's deadly judgments will turn the world upside down. Out of Earth's smoldering ruins, Babylon will arise with a foolish plan to appease God's wrath. Its solution will unwittingly defy the authority of Jesus and the testimony of the 144,000. The conflict between Babylon and the 144,000 forces everyone into making a decision. If a person obeys God's truth, he will be severely punished by the authorities of Babylon. If a person obeys the laws of Babylon, Jesus will destroy him during the seven last plagues. This will be a "no win" situation that catches most Christians by surprise. Regardless of familial ties, language, culture, education, religion, or race, four simple messages from God will separate mankind into two groups of people; the sheep and the goats.

The Great Tribulation Begins

The first message that comes from Jesus will be shocking. It will come as an outright demand and billions of people will im-

mediately find it offensive. The 144,000 will declare that everyone is required to worship Jesus Christ, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. This message will begin on Day One of the Great Tribulation, when the censer is cast down.² This demand will be proclaimed and heard until the 1,260th day of the Great Tribulation. A second message will join with the first message when the composite beast, Babylon, rises from the sea. The second message will be highly inflammatory. This message from Jesus will declare that Babylon's endeavor is false, its demands are an insult to Jesus and its ways are blasphemous. Of course, the second message will make the leaders of Babylon furious with the 144,000 and all who embrace it. Later, a third message will come from Jesus as an ultimatum. After the devil physically appears on Earth (during the fifth trumpet), the 144,000 will warn, "If anyone worships and obeys the 'lamblike beast,' Jesus will destroy that person at the Second Coming."³ Finally, a fourth message will be given when the sixth trumpet sounds (when Lucifer sets up a counterfeit theocracy). This message will be God's last call to mankind.⁴ This final message will push the undecided into a firm decision. Those who refuse to worship Jesus and obey His commandments will reject the Holy Spirit. They will worship the beast and commit the unpardonable sin.⁵ Once every decision has been made, Jesus will conduct a special service in Heaven.⁶ He will terminate God's generous offer of redemption with this declaration: **"Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."**⁷

Victory Celebration

The final event recorded in this prophecy is a victory celebration in Heaven. This ceremony will take place on the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation. On this day, the 144,000 will be resurrected and taken to Heaven. They will gather around the throne of God and sing a song of deliverance and vindication just before the seven last plagues begin. The scene described in this prophecy (Revelation 15:2-4) is a repetition and enlargement of the scene presented in the previous prophecy (Revelation 14:1-5).

It may seem strange that God would "tack on" the victory celebration of the 144,000 to a prophecy that contains three messages and a scene that describes the close of salvation. Do you recall that we found this phenomenon in Prophecies 7, 9, and 11? God

sometimes embeds an “odd” element in an apocalyptic prophecy to reveal something that could be misunderstood or easily overlooked. Because each element in an apocalyptic prophecy occurs in chronological order and is related to the other elements in that prophecy, we need to look for the relationship that exists between the odd element and the rest of the elements! This process always produces a wonderful discovery. In this case, this prophecy concludes with the victory celebration of the 144,000 because *they* overcame the beast. They successfully presented three difficult messages to a very hostile world! In other words, their celebration is included in this prophecy because they accomplished the impossible task (humanly speaking) of delivering the gospel of Jesus to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people on Earth!

Consider, for a moment, the daunting challenge of being a prophet. When it comes to enduring physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering, speaking for God is one of the most difficult tasks on Earth. Bible history reveals that God’s prophets often have a short life span because the carnal nature is always hostile to the will and ways of God. God often requires prophets to deliver inflammatory words even though proclaiming them may be difficult! Bible history clearly reveals how God’s prophets have been scorned, rejected, exiled, put in dungeons, tortured, and put to death because the carnal nature hates God’s authority.⁸ Jesus warned His disciples that they would be persecuted just as He had been persecuted.⁹ In fact, the apostle John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos because he spoke the words which God gave Him to speak!¹⁰ Like the prophet John, the 144,000 will faithfully deliver the Word of God during the Great Tribulation, day after day, without regard for the consequences and their suffering will be extreme. Most of the world will oppose the 144,000, but suffering and persecution will not intimidate them or stop them. They do not let up, put up, or shut up until death silences them.¹¹ Therefore, God has planned a great celebration for them and this event is found at the end of this prophecy!

Who Will Deliver the Three Angel’s Messages?

The Bible indicates that *only* the 144,000 will speak for God during the Great Tribulation. Please consider the following six items:

1. We learned in Prophecy 7 that 144,000 people will be selected and sealed (carnal natures removed) before God’s wrath (the first four trumpets) occur.

2. We learned in Prophecy 9 that John, representing the experience of the 144,000, was given a little book to eat. This book contains the words which the 144,000 will speak during the Great Tribulation. When the appointed time arrives, Jesus will make this declaration from Heaven: **“There will be no more delay.”** The censer will be cast down and Day One of the Great Tribulation will begin. The 144,000 will immediately go to work, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus for 1,260 miserable days. Eventually, the devil and his forces will kill most, if not all of the 144,000. On the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation, the 144,000 will be resurrected and taken to Heaven.
3. The Bible says the 144,000 will be presented to God as firstfruits of the coming harvest. They are called firstfruits because they are the first to be sealed and the first of the final harvest to be taken to Heaven. They will be God’s mouthpieces during the Great Tribulation. The Bible says, **“No lie was found in their mouths.”** This means they faithfully spoke the words which God gave them to speak without compromise or deviation. They will faithfully deliver everything that Jesus tells them to say without diluting His words to avoid personal injury or rejection.
4. In this prophecy (Prophecy 12), we will discover that these three messages are sent to mankind from God’s throne. Only the 144,000, *those selected, sealed, and empowered to speak for God* can deliver these messages. Only the 144,000 people *free of the carnal nature*, can present the testimony of Jesus to the human race without deviation or compromise.
5. At the end of this prophecy (Prophecy 12), we will find the 144,000 in Heaven singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Only the 144,000 can sing the song of Moses and the Lamb because they lived through a similar experience to Moses and the Lamb! God selected Moses to lead His people out of slavery. It took forty frustrating years for Israel to arrive at Canaan’s door, but Moses accomplished the work which the Lord gave Him to do. In a similar way, the 144,000 will lead God’s people, under extreme circumstances, out of sin’s slavery and into the sealing experience. The song of the Lamb is a song sung by Jesus. The Father sent Jesus to Earth as the Lamb of God. Jesus

came to a hostile world so that the Father could speak His truth through Him.¹² Jesus did not deviate from the words that the Father gave him and the Jews killed Jesus. This same “truth” will cause the devil and his forces to kill the 144,000. Therefore, only the 144,000 can sing the songs of experience which Moses and the Lamb sing. The numberless multitude will sing a different song.

6. Finally, this prophecy (Prophecy 12) indicates there will be a victorious celebration over the beast and his image and the number of his name *prior to* the commencement of the seven last plagues.¹³ Consider the following specification closely: **“And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. . . .”**¹⁴ This text indicates the celebrants were on Earth *when* the image of the beast was set up and the mark of the beast imposed. There is only one group of people who can meet these specifications and be in Heaven *before* the seven plagues begin – the 144,000. Once we have examined the story found in this prophecy, the inclusion of a great victory celebration at the end will make perfect sense!

The Sequence Begins

This prophecy begins with Day One of the Great Tribulation, the day when services at the Altar of Incense will be terminated.¹⁵ When Day One arrives, I believe the whole world will be involved with a horrible war that includes a nuclear exchange.¹⁶ When the angel serving at the Altar of Incense casts down the censer, a great display of divine power will impact Earth. The sky will suddenly become dark, angry clouds will appear, and there will be an awesome display of electrical power. The sky will explode into huge sheets of rapid-fire lightning. Deafening and intimidating peals of thunder will seem to pile upon each other and the noise will be so great that everyone on Earth will tremble. Meanwhile, groans and voices will be heard coming out of the Earth. It will seem as though Earth itself is trying to speak. Then, a *global* earthquake will break the whole world into geographic cells. (Maybe there will be 144,000 cells, one cell for each of the 144,000.) There will be no place of safety, no escape from these phenomena. This earthquake will destroy thousands of buildings, power grids, dams, highways, bridges, antennas, trestles, runways, and overpasses. Suddenly,

without warning, in the middle of a nuclear war, the Great Tribulation begins. The infrastructures of the world are ruined. Within minutes, the inhabitants of Earth will discover that communication and travel are next to impossible. The impact of these phenomena will be so great that the nuclear war will end. The nations will stop fighting each other and Earth will fall strangely silent. Everyone will be scared to death. Many religious people will correctly guess that Almighty God has signaled His displeasure with the degenerate behavior of mankind.¹⁷ As a result of these horrific events, a global crisis of apocalyptic proportion will begin to unfold. Eventually, nations will discover that other nations have also been ravaged and no one will be in a position to help another. Everyone will have to do his best to survive.

The First Angel's Message: An Outright Demand

{6} I looked into the sky and I saw a brilliant angel descend from God's throne. He came to Earth and orbited the planet for 1,260 days. He carried a demand from Jesus – a timeless truth – a gospel that is everlasting, having no beginning or end. He spoke to the people below, to every nation, tribe, language, and people. Everyone understood his words in his or her own tongue.

{7} He said in a loud voice, "Fear God Almighty. His name is Jesus Christ. Be afraid of Him. Give Him the honor and glory that He is due. Submit to His authority because the time has come for Him to pass judgment upon the living. You must worship Him by resting from your labors on His holy day, His seventh day Sabbath. His Sabbath remains a memorial to His creative work. He created the heavens, the Earth, the sea, and the springs of water in six days and rested on the seventh."

The Eternal Gospel

A display of divine power on Day One of the Great Tribulation will stop the world in its tracks. Jesus will put mankind on notice that the previous order of life has been terminated. Jesus will take matters into His capable hands and He will ensure that everyone hears and intelligently considers His gospel. The casting down of the censer and the physical phenomena (including a global earthquake) that follow will serve as a signal which no one can deny. These events will tell the informed that Day One of the Great Tribulation has begun. For 1,260 days God's prophets will proclaim the eternal gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

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And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

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Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

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The eternal gospel is a timeless, non-negotiable demand that has no beginning and no end. Therefore, it would be a contradiction in terms to say that the *eternal* gospel is limited to the 1,335 days allotted for the Great Tribulation. Before time began and anything was created, the Father ordained the eternal gospel. This gospel is that throughout eternity, all creation must worship Jesus Christ, the Creator, just as they worship the Father.¹⁸ This is the reason for the term, the “eternal” or “everlasting” gospel. When Lucifer tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus reminded Lucifer of the eternal gospel.¹⁹ Jesus is the Creator of everything that exists.²⁰ Therefore, every being in Heaven and on Earth is commanded to fear, honor, and worship Jesus the Creator. During the Great Tribulation, every human being will hear the 144,000 proclaim the eternal gospel and everyone will be required to submit to its demand or be destroyed. This is the Father’s will. Each person’s eternal destiny will be determined by his response to the eternal gospel.”²¹

As you might expect, when the eternal gospel is proclaimed to the world with power and authority, it will offend billions of people for two reasons. First, most of the world opposes the idea that Jesus Christ is Almighty God (an equal with the Father in every way) and second, billions of people (including millions of Christians) reject the idea that Jesus is the Creator of Heaven and Earth²² by rejecting His claim that He made the Earth in six days and rested on the seventh. Most Christians also believe that it is not necessary to obey the Creator’s Ten Commandments, especially His fourth commandment which declares the seventh day of the week to be holy. Therefore, when Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and all other religious groups are told to worship Jesus Christ by resting from their labor on His seventh day Sabbath, a huge majority of the world will immediately become hostile toward the 144,000!

The eternal gospel will upset most everyone in one way or another, but the Father determined long ago that it must be presented to the world *as a testing truth* before the end can come.²³ To subdue the hearts and minds of people so that they can hear the eternal gospel, Jesus will send a series of divine judgments. An awesome display of divine authority will bring the whole world to a stand still on Day One of the Great Tribulation. Then, a few days later, the first four trumpets will begin. In other words, overwhelming and overpowering wrath will subdue and humble the

world. Nuclear war will cease and mankind will hear what Jesus has to say. The 144,000 will be selected and sealed just before Day One occurs. Then, on Day One, they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to fearlessly present the eternal gospel. The 144,000 will perform great signs and wonders, the Holy Spirit will deeply trouble every listener's heart with the validity of the eternal gospel and the Bible will plainly validate the testimony of the 144,000. What could be more fair?

The ministry of the 144,000 during the Great Tribulation is represented in this prophecy as three glorious angels orbiting Earth because the eternal gospel will be presented to everyone in the clearest of terms. The orbiting angels (flying in the sky) indicate global coverage. Because the 144,000 will be located in every quadrant (or geographic cell) of the world on Day One, the delivery of the eternal gospel will be quickly heard throughout the world. Additionally, the arrival of three angels from Heaven indicates there will be three messages that come straight from God's throne. To level the playing field, the eternal gospel will not be presented by a religious body or organization. The 144,000 will consist of honest-hearted people coming from all walks, cultures and religious systems.²⁴ Once they meet with Jesus (as Paul did on the road to Damascus and as John did when he received the little book), they will become believers in Christ and they will be given the words that God wants them to speak to their own people. Because Jesus intends to save as many people as possible during the Great Tribulation, Jesus will have "brothers" speaking to "brothers." What could be more effective than having an honest-hearted Moslem who has met with Jesus and believes in Jesus delivering the words that Jesus gave him to speak? This converted Moslem knows the language, culture, and religious beliefs of his brothers. What could be more effective at winning Moslems over to the eternal gospel of Jesus? What could be more effective than an honest-hearted Catholic speaking the words that Jesus gave him to speak to fellow Catholics? What could be more effective than a converted Hindu speaking the words that Jesus gave him? In terms of saving the highest number of people, what could be more effective than 144,000 brothers and sisters speaking to *their own* brothers and sisters?

The Great Tribulation will begin like a thief in the night. It will be an overwhelming surprise, even to those of us who anticipate it. People will be traumatized, confused and disoriented for awhile,

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but the demands of the eternal gospel will not abate. The eternal gospel existed before life was created and this gospel of God's kingdom will endure throughout eternity. This eternal truth will be declared: Jesus Christ is Almighty God just like the Father. Jesus is an equal of the Father.²⁵ He is the Creator of everything that exists and on the basis of Jesus' divinity, the Father has determined that Jesus will receive the same honor and worship given to the Father, whom no one has seen or can see."²⁶

Fear Jesus?

Why does the eternal gospel begin with the phrase, "Fear God?" Why should we be afraid of our Creator, Jesus Christ? The Greek word, *phobeo* (English: phobia) literally means what it says, "be afraid!" Within the context of the eternal gospel, *phobeo* means that all created beings are to fear the Creator (Jesus) with the same fear, honor, and respect that we give to God the Father.²⁷ You have heard the expression, "Like father, like son," and in this case, this phrase is an eternal truth. Although Jesus is a separate and distinct co-eternal God, He has every power and substance that the Father has!²⁸ This means that the redemption of mankind is far more expensive than most people realize. To redeem sinners, our Creator, a coeternal member of the Godhead who is equal with the Father,²⁹ gave up everything He possessed, even His eternal life so that we might have it.

Before Jesus came to Earth as "the Son of man," He set aside His divine powers and subjected Himself to whatever the Father required for man's salvation.³⁰ The Father predetermined that Jesus should be presented to the human race as a poor man, a man without education, good looks, or wealth. The Father decided that Jesus had to live among the poorest of people. Jesus was not given a handsome appearance. There was nothing physically appealing about Him.³¹ Socially speaking, Jesus was an outcast.³² In terms of human behavior, He was strange, unlike His peers. Even as a teenager, He never sinned.³³ If it had not been for the words and miracles that the Father performed through Him, the leaders of Israel would not have given Jesus two minutes of their time. Even His disciples abandoned Him when He stood before Pilate and went to the cross.

When the first message is presented to mankind, fearing Jesus will be a new thought for most people because currently, the full identity of Jesus is poorly understood. You might be interested to

know that a similar thing happened to the angels! Please consider the following story.

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The Revealing of Jesus Christ in Heaven

[**Note:** This explanation on the origin of sin is to be understood as my “best guess.” I have merged many Bible facts and a few parallels from Christ’s ministry on Earth to tell a story about Lucifer’s eviction from Heaven. The purpose of this explanation on the origin of sin is to demonstrate how the *eternal* gospel could have been used to separate the angels in Heaven and of course, how it will also be used to separate the people of Earth during the Great Tribulation.]

There was a time in Heaven when the angels poorly understood the fullness of all that Jesus is. The angels called (and they still call) Jesus by the name, Michael. He was Michael, the archangel, long before mankind called Him Jesus.³⁴ The angels were delighted to worship Michael whenever and wherever they saw Him. Physically speaking, Michael looked like an ordinary angel. Even though He was the archangel, there was nothing special about His appearance. He mingled among the angels in Heaven with the same humility that He later displayed among men on Earth. In both cases, one could not tell by His physical appearance that He was in fact, the Creator of the universe.

Even though the name Michael means “One who is like God,” the angels did not question the origin of Michael or the natural order of their wonderful life. They were happy and safe. Heaven was harmonious and the angels were completely engaged with learning and doing new things every day. God’s universe is huge and full of ceaseless wonders. To make matters even better, Michael conducted classes in different parts of Heaven from time to time and sitting at His feet was a very special treat for the angels. Michael was their favorite teacher although Lucifer was deeply loved and respected as a substitute teacher. Lucifer served as the leader of the angels when Michael was elsewhere, but Lucifer was not the archangel. For a long time, Lucifer was very close to Michael and they spent much time together. Lucifer had many natural gifts and responsibilities. Lucifer was Heaven’s most extraordinary angel.

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Lucifer held the highest position given to any created being. As the second covering cherub, he stood on the left side of God's throne whenever convocations with the Father were held,³⁵ whereas Michael stood at the right hand of the Father. The angels worshiped the Father on a regular basis and they also worshiped Michael wherever and whenever they saw Him. The angels always looked forward to worshiping in the presence of the Father who lives in unapproachable light.³⁶

The angels knew the Father was the Supreme Ruler, the Most High God of the universe. His gifts to the angels constantly renewed their love and adoration for Him. The angels also worshiped Michael whenever they saw Him because they understood *by faith* that He was their Creator. They also understood *by faith* that Michael was the source and sustainer of life within each angel. In Him, the angels moved and had their being.³⁷ Even though the angels believed these things about Michael, they had no idea how His creative powers worked.

Adam and Eve did not see Michael create the Earth because they were created last, on the sixth day of the week. In fact, Adam did not see Jesus create Eve because Jesus put Adam into a deep sleep!³⁸ Similarly, the angels did not watch Jesus create the universe. Jesus created them *after* He created the universe. This is important to the story because the angels did not witness Michael exercising His awesome creative powers *before* Lucifer fell. The angels knew that Michael created them, but they embraced this truth and worshiped Michael on the basis of *faith alone*. The angels did not see the creative powers of Michael demonstrated in much the same way that all of Creation Week was hidden from human view.

Over time, Lucifer became jealous of Michael. His jealousy began when he coveted 'the higher position' of *the other covering cherub*. The angels worshiped Michael, but they did not worship Lucifer. Michael could enter into the unapproachable light that surrounds the Father³⁹ and Lucifer could not. It was also odd that Michael looked like an ordinary angel and Lucifer did not. Lucifer was created as a model of perfection; he was more beautiful than any of the other angels. Lucifer eventually became jealous of Michael because he allowed passion to overrule self-control. Lucifer's jealousy began with vanity and a desire for higher entitlement. He came to think more of himself than he did of Michael and he coveted the

worship and adoration that was given to Michael. Lucifer nursed his envy for a long time before he made a fatal choice.

Lucifer's Vanity

One day, Lucifer found a clever way to put himself on par with Michael. Lucifer began by using his perfect beauty and exalted position as a covering cherub⁴⁰ to elevate himself *into equality with* Michael among his closest friends. Over time, Lucifer argued that to be fair, the angels “really should” worship *both* covering cherubs. Lucifer’s friends did not suspect an evil intent. They had sinless natures and they loved Lucifer and deeply respected his leadership. As a result, some angels did not see anything logically wrong with worshipping ‘the other covering cherub.’ However, there was something about this that did not seem right to most of the angels. As time went by, Lucifer gained sympathizers because he promoted those who worshiped him to higher positions and with this maneuver, the concept of politics began in Heaven. Suddenly, two parties existed in Heaven; angels loyal to Lucifer and angels loyal to Michael. Happiness and innocence began to evaporate. Tension displaced happiness. Attitudes and allegiances began to go in different directions and this was very unsettling.

Lucifer was careful to avoid open conflict with Michael. Instead, Lucifer preferred to present his arguments in secret meetings, using the excuse that his hushed endeavor was all about fairness. One of his favorite arguments went like this: “How can it be fair of God to permit the angels to worship one covering cherub and not the other?” Unfortunately, many angels sided with Lucifer and concluded that in fact, God was unfair! Angels loyal to Lucifer defended him saying that he was just as worthy and important as Michael because he was a covering cherub, the *other* chief prince!⁴¹ As disaffection for the Father and Michael grew, the devil twisted everything that Michael did and said. Lucifer put righteousness in the worst possible light. He made Michael’s actions appear self-serving and harmful to the angels’ welfare, although nothing harmful had ever happened. Lucifer raised many questions and doubts about God’s government which God had not specifically addressed. Lucifer presented clever arguments which ultimately caused one-third of the angels to doubt that the Father was fair and Michael was the Creator of the universe. Remember, no angel had seen Michael create anything at that time, so Lucifer’s arguments gained some traction with sympathizers.

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Lucifer's campaign against Michael went on for a long time. He undermined the joy of Heaven and over time, Lucifer's controversy with Michael became widely known. Lucifer's rebellion matured when he recruited enough followers and he began to secure their loyalty with promises of higher positions and freedom from the Father's tyranny. Of course, the Father knew everything that was going on. Time after time, the Holy Spirit tried to convict Lucifer of wrong doing, but Lucifer would not listen. The Father and Michael spent time with Lucifer and addressed his concerns, but Lucifer would not relent. He could not be embarrassed before his followers. Lucifer and his followers were warned repeatedly that their disaffection would bring about their destruction,* but they mistook the Father's patience as indecisiveness and the threat of destruction as evidence of tyranny.

Lucifer told his followers, "God cannot tolerate the possibility of competition. He is not a God of love. You have heard Him say that it is His way or sudden death." Lucifer used such propaganda to accelerate his wicked agenda and his followers eventually became bold in their rebellion. The sweet and softening influence of the Holy Spirit was totally shut out. The Holy Spirit could not change the growing bitterness within Lucifer or his followers.

The Demand

Lucifer's controversy with Christ came to a head at a regularly scheduled convocation. As usual, Lucifer called the meeting to

***Note:** Before the angels were created, the Father implemented a law that requires the immediate death for anyone who sins. This law was *also* imposed on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden,⁴² but the Father has suspended this law until the knowledge of good and evil has matured.⁴³ After the drama of sin is completed, this law will be enforced. In the future, if someone should willfully ignore the testimony of ex-sinners and the urging of the Holy Spirit, that defiant sinner will be destroyed on the day that he sins. If God's sudden death law should be implemented at any time in the future, God's children will not question the righteousness of this law because everyone in the future will understand all that sin does. Sin and its curse will not permeate God's universe again. There will be no salvation for any future sinner after the current drama with sin ends.

order. The angels gathered around God's awesome throne and typically, before the Father's glorious presence filled the temple, Michael arrived and took His position on the right side of the throne. When Michael took His position on that day, one-third of Heaven's angels refused to bow down before Him. This had never happened before. Suddenly, the Father's glorious presence came into the temple. His presence was unusually brilliant. Of course, the service abruptly stopped.

The Father spoke. He commanded everyone to stand up and carefully consider His words. He acknowledged the conflict between Lucifer and Michael. He described Lucifer's jealousy and his subsequent campaign to gain the adoration and worship of the angels. His report was presented with embarrassing clarity. He reviewed incidents and conversations that were not common knowledge. He also exposed many lies which Lucifer had made up. In short, the Father laid bare the jealousy of Lucifer and his hatred for Michael. Then, the Father said, "Let everyone hear and understand this eternal truth: Fear Michael who, like myself, is Almighty God. Give Michael the honor and glory that you give me. Worship Michael your Creator as you worship me, because He made you and the Heavens and all that is in them. In Him, you move and have your being. The hour of your judgment has come. Bow down and worship Him right now or you will be destroyed!"

Every angel was caught by surprise. A clear line had been drawn, a decisive moment of truth confronted them. Their faith in Michael was put to a test. Was Michael the Creator of the angels and the universe or was He not? Each angel was forced to make a decision that would affect his eternal destiny. There was a sound of movement as two-thirds of the angels bowed down before Michael, but Lucifer, sensing this would be his last defense, broke the awkward silence with his commanding voice. He spoke adamantly and with authority, "I will not worship Michael." Then, he pointed to his many followers who were still standing. He said, "We do not think the Father is fair. You claim to be a God of love, but you give us no choice! Your law says "obey and live, disobey and die!" How loving is this? Is it fair that the Father requires us to worship and honor Michael while ignoring the exalted position of *the other covering cherub*? You say that Michael is the Creator, but we have not seen any evidence of His creative powers! Many of us think that your government is based on arbitrary whim and it is secured through your mighty powers. You and your Tattletale, Michael, have con-

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spired to keep us as your slaves and if we rebel, you threaten to destroy us. This is not right, this is not fair, this is not love and we will not bow down and worship Michael.”

Lucifer’s defiant response to the Father was shocking. The silence that followed was unbearable. Heaven had never experienced any tension like this! Lucifer and his followers remained standing. One-third of the angels had disobeyed a direct order! They had been warned of the consequences of rebellion and still, they openly defied the clearest evidences of the Father’s will. They refused to bow down before Michael. They refused to worship a God who lived in the form of an angel. Suddenly there was a frightening sound like the sizzle and searing crackle of nearby lightning. A tremendous burst of light blinded the angels’ eyes and a deafening crash of thunder fell upon the assembly. The ground trembled and a great crevice opened up. Lucifer and his angels were swept into the crevice and in a matter of seconds, it closed up. Lucifer and his angels were cast out of Heaven at the speed of lightning.⁴⁴ The drama was so overwhelming and it happened so fast that the remaining angels remained prostrate on their faces until the Father spoke again. He said kindly, “My children, today *your faith in Christ* has saved you. Stand up and behold your Creator!”

This dramatic event defined Michael in a new way that the angels had not considered. Prior to Lucifer’s expulsion, they were innocent and naive. They lived in a sinless universe and had sinless natures. The angels naturally loved one another and serving the Father, the Archangel and Lucifer was a special delight. Angels had not seen sin or rebellion, so they could not understand the malignant effects that sin produces, but their naivete vanished. The knowledge of good *and evil* began to unfold that day.

Creation Observed

After Lucifer and his followers were expelled from Heaven, the angels witnessed for the first time, the awesome creative power of Michael. They watched in awe as He created the Earth and all that is in it.⁴⁵ **“For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”**⁴⁶ After watching the creation of Earth and the creation of millions of life forms that would occupy Earth in six, twenty-four hour days, the angels worshiped Michael as though He was a new deity in Heaven! It was so exciting. Suddenly, the Michael they had known for thousands of years was so much more than the archangel. He was so humble in appearance,

yet His creative powers were awesome and divine! Later on, when the heavenly angels saw Jesus die on Calvary, they gained another perspective on the depth of Michael's love that words cannot convey. It became clear to them that Michael/Jesus is not an angel. In fact, He is not a man. Jesus is The Alpha and The Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, He is Almighty God, just like the Father. Prior to coming to Earth, Jesus lived as an angel so that He could show the angels how God would live if He were an angel. Jesus also lived as an angel so that He could tell the Father about the angel's experiences from their perspective. What amazing love!

One last point. The angels did not see Michael create the Earth and all that is in it until their faith in Him as Creator had been tested. In other words, *after* Lucifer and his angels were cast out of Heaven, the angels saw Michael create for the first time. Similarly, the saints will not see Jesus exercise His creative powers until their faith in Him has been tested. At the end of the 1,000 years, Jesus will destroy Lucifer and all the wicked. After destroying death itself, the saints will watch as Jesus once again exercises His amazing power. Jesus will create a new Heaven and a new Earth! In Heaven and on Earth, the creative powers of Michael/Jesus and other facts about Him have been hidden for a time,⁴⁷ because *faith in Jesus Christ* is always and forever the key to eternal life.

Lucifer Permitted to Live

I hope you can see how there was a time when the angels did not fully understand who Michael was. This knowledge was not revealed until their faith in Him could be tested. Similarly, the angels could not know what sin was all about until sin occurred and matured. This also means the angels could not know the fullness of Michael's love and power until they saw Him resolve the sin problem! A bittersweet thing has happened because of sin. The Father permitted Lucifer and his angels to live for a while so that the nature, scope, and complexity of sin might mature and the universe could clearly understand the consequences of sin. The Father's decision to allow sin to mature has produced an enormous amount of questioning, suffering, and death, but this outcome has been offset by two wonderful developments.

First, God wants everyone to know that He has given His subjects the power of choice. In fact, sin and rebellion only exist because

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Lucifer and his followers *chose* to sin and rebel. At the end of the 1,000 years, Jesus will destroy Lucifer and his followers – not because He dislikes them or they offended Him. In fact, Jesus loves the wicked angels, but He must destroy Lucifer and his followers because sin turned them into predators. Consider the process: Lucifer became jealous of Jesus; he wanted the adoration and worship that belonged to Michael. Lucifer was moved by his envy and jealousy to seek sympathizers. He preyed upon innocent angels with lies and propaganda. After God banished Lucifer from Heaven, he preyed upon Eve and Adam. Cain was motivated by jealousy to prey upon Abel. Throughout the ages, history has revealed the wicked are predators and they always prey on the innocent and/or the righteous. This is why God destroyed the world with a flood in Noah's day. This is why God burned Sodom and Gomorrah to the ground. *Given enough time and the right circumstances, all sinners will exhibit predatory behavior.* Predatory behavior stems from selfishness. Predatory behavior occurs because it offers the shortest path to fulfilling a selfish desire and this natural orientation within fallen man is inescapable. This is why the removal of the carnal nature, the sealing, is so important. The sinless nature naturally conforms to God's two laws of love. Predatory behavior is the result of sin and this is why those who refuse to repent and forsake their sins must be destroyed. God is willing to give us the strength to subdue our predatory nature if we are willing to receive His strength. Eternal salvation is as much about eternal life as it is freedom *from the predatory tendencies* that comes with sin. Every born again believer can taste the joy and peace of eternal life which will come in due time. Strength and grace from God transforms sinners so that they can overcome passion and the power of sin each day!⁴⁸

Second, by allowing Lucifer to live and flourish for a time, God chose to use the curse of sin to reveal the depth of His love for His creation. Because of sin, many aspects about the Father and His government have been revealed that would have otherwise remained obscure for billions of years! The Father wisely permitted sin to exist for a period of time and once it is destroyed, sin will never permeate the universe again. Once the drama of sin is completed, everyone in the universe will have the knowledge of good and evil and all future creations will have the opportunity to study the sin problem and how it developed. No one who has been

freed from sin's curse will ever want a repetition of living with sin's curse.

Our Heavenly Father predetermined long ago that the capstone to resolving the sin problem was a full disclosure of our Creator, Jesus Christ! The sin problem started when Lucifer (a created being), wanted to be an equal or better than Jesus (the Creator). Of course, when Lucifer became jealous he did not know everything about Jesus. Lucifer could see that Jesus was not as beautiful as himself. Lucifer did not know that Jesus was "God in angel's feathers" and this led to his assumption that he should be respected with the same adoration and worship. Little did Lucifer realize that the humble archangel was Almighty God who was the Creator of life itself. We know much more about Jesus today than ever before. The Bible declares that Jesus is the Creator of Heaven and Earth.⁴⁹ He is Almighty God.⁵⁰ He is the only antidote for sin.⁵¹ Our Creator is the Savior of mankind and a mirror of the Father's humble character.⁵² It is ironic that Lucifer and his angels were created with sinless natures, yet they chose to rebel. On the other hand, the offspring of Adam and Eve were born with rebellious natures, but many have chosen to surrender to the Holy Spirit and be saved! All who obey the Holy Spirit will be saved and the redeemed of Earth will repopulate Heaven! God will restore Heaven's population to three-thirds again and this time, Heaven will be better than before because one-third of God's house will be conquerors over rebellion! They lived in sin and overcame it through Christ's power.⁵³

Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar

When the 144,000 present the eternal gospel by telling the world that Jesus is Almighty God the Creator, billions of people will be strongly opposed. We can be sure that the demand to worship Jesus by resting on His Sabbath day will inflame 99.9% of the world, but the evidences of God's wrath will keep people subdued for a short time.

When presented to the world, the eternal gospel will produce an enormous problem. This is to be expected. When the Father declared the eternal gospel in Heaven, He tested each angel. The angels had no doubt about God's will, for they heard the Father's voice with their own ears. Similarly, each person's response to the eternal gospel will reveal the true condition of his heart. Keep in mind, the eternal gospel will be clearly presented, but the demand

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will not be based on “ears” alone. The Holy Spirit and the two laws of love will bear witness that the testimony of the 144,000 is faithful and true! Those who love God and are acquainted with the Holy Spirit will obey once they understand. Unfortunately, billions will reject “a plain thus saith the Lord” from Scripture. They will also reject the Holy Spirit.

Jesus understands the cultural and religious diversity of mankind. In fact, Jesus is responsible for the diversity of mankind. It all began at the Tower of Babel when Jesus divided the language of the world.⁵⁴ Jesus made the dispersion of mankind permanent when He later divided the Earth into continents.⁵⁵ Jesus knew that after mankind was separated, great spiritual darkness would cover each nation. To counteract this darkness, He chose the descendants of Abraham to be a light to the Gentiles. Unfortunately, Israel failed. Then, Jesus raised up the Christian Church and later, a Protestant movement within it, but they failed too. The religious arrogance and ignorance that plagues the world today cannot be overcome by the will of man. One man cannot prove to another the superiority of his religious thinking. Therefore, the presentation of the eternal gospel will require an unusual display of divine power. A very interesting experience awaits the world.

The eternal gospel will produce a confrontation similar to the day that Moses and Aaron went to the palace and presented themselves before the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was going about his usual routines when suddenly, “. . . **Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.’ Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go.’**”⁵⁶

I am sure that Pharaoh was stunned when he heard two old men present the Lord’s demand. Pharaoh spoke the truth when he said that he did not know the God of Israel. Therefore, he *naturally* refused to obey such a command. Jesus respects the reasoning powers that He gave to mankind. Jesus knew that Pharaoh did not know Him. Jesus also knew that from a practical point of view, Pharaoh could not let his slaves go free because they would never come back! Jesus knew from the beginning that Pharaoh would reject His demand⁵⁷ because the departure of Israel (cheap

labor) would ruin Egypt's economy! Pharaoh knew that if he gave an inch, the Israelites would take a mile. Therefore, he *reasonably* refused to obey God's demand and let Israel go. However, Pharaoh made a huge mistake. After watching ten plagues fall on his kingdom, the king should have realized (as Nebuchadnezzar finally did) that there is a Most High God in Heaven that overrules the will of man.⁵⁸ It is ironic that after suffering ten destructive plagues, Pharaoh would not recognize or acknowledge God's higher authority. Therefore, God destroyed him in the Red Sea.

In a sense, sinners are kings like Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar! Each person rules over his own heart and mind. When the people of Earth hear the eternal gospel for the first time, they will reject it because it is foreign. Like Pharaoh, most people do not know Jesus. Initially, the eternal gospel will make almost everyone angry. However, the first four trumpets will produce so much destruction that many survivors will begin to listen. This may sound strange, but God's wrath will enable Him to save many people that would not otherwise listen to Him! Moses and Aaron called down plagues on Egypt. God responded with dire judgments to soften Pharaoh's heart, but Pharaoh refused to submit to God's sovereign power even after there was unmistakable evidence of God's will. Pharaoh made the fatal mistake of thinking that his authority was greater than the God of the Hebrews. King Nebuchadnezzar also made the same mistake, but after seven years of eating grass like an animal, he confessed there is a Most High God who rules over the kingdoms of men. Nebuchadnezzar finally submitted to God's authority and gave Him glory!

Jesus understands the rebellious nature of the carnal heart very well and this explains why the seven trumpets will be redemptive judgments. This is why the Two Witnesses will testify for 1,260 days. The 144,000 will present the demand that everyone worship the Creator who made the Heavens, the Earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters. By the way, these four items are included in the eternal gospel because the Creator who made them will destroy one-third of each of them! The scope and sequence of these coming judgments (plainly described in Revelation 8) will prove to the sincere in heart that the eternal gospel is a demand from God. Furthermore, the 144,000 will call down all kinds of plagues on Earth (just like Moses and Aaron did) as often as they want⁵⁹ to further demonstrate that their testimony comes from God."

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Faith or Works?

Propaganda is a clever mixture of truth and lies. As a political tool, propaganda is highly effective because most people do not have access to the whole truth. Therefore, propaganda is often used to influence or determine the outcome of a political race. Propaganda is not concerned with “the whole truth and nothing but the truth,” so consequently, propaganda enables evil minded people to promote or believe whatever they want. Propaganda is effective because it creates or enhances bias and prejudice. Lucifer is *the* creator and master of propaganda. Lucifer led a third of the angels astray with propaganda and he will use this tool to lead the wicked into destruction. Ironically, during the Great Tribulation Lucifer will promote *the same false gospel* that he once accused God of imposing on the angels. Lucifer will make the eternal gospel appear to say: “Obey and live, disobey and die.”

Many people do not properly understand the relationship between faith and works. How does faith in Christ and the eternal gospel mix together? Before Lucifer was expelled from Heaven, he became a liar.⁶⁰ He became a master at misrepresenting the actions of the Father and Michael. Using propaganda, he skillfully made the Godhead appear to be evil minded and one-third of Heaven’s holy angels believed his lies! (Eve, in her sinless state, also believed Lucifer’s lies.) Lucifer’s cunning and sophistry is beyond measure. If the demands of the eternal gospel were set before the people of Earth *at any other time* than during the Great Tribulation, one could argue the point that the eternal gospel boils down to, “obey and live, disobey and die!” To eliminate this possibility, a presentation of the eternal gospel *requires a special setting*, a context where God Himself clearly sets the evidence of His will before people and each person is informed in advance about the consequences of his decision. This is the way it happened in Heaven and this is the way it will happen on Earth! Two-thirds of the holy angels were saved by faith when the eternal gospel was set before them and a numberless multitude of saints will be saved because of their faith!

The Special Setting

Sin has physically separated human beings from God’s presence, which promotes endless confusion around the world about the identity and will of whatever is worshiped as God. Because each of the world’s religious systems are convinced that their knowledge

of God is truth and all others are in error, unimpeachable evidence must accompany the eternal gospel to prove that the 144,000 speak truth while the rest of the religious world speak lies. What will prove that worshiping Jesus on His seventh day Sabbath is the will of God? This is a profoundly important question that will confront Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Catholics, Atheists, Protestants, and all others. How can religiously diverse people make an intelligent and informed decision about a gospel that is unlike anything they believe to be true?⁶¹ The solution is rather simple.

Jesus will speak to each religious group through the lips of the 144,000. Their words will be invincible and the 144,000 will perform signs and wonders as often as needed to confirm their testimony.⁶² Jesus already knows each person on Earth, He knows what to say to the honest in heart in every nation and religious system.⁶³ Jesus is no respecter of persons.⁶⁴ He loves everyone the same, He is the Creator of *all* mankind.⁶⁵ Therefore, to be fair and impartial to people in all religious systems, the eternal gospel will be attended with “a plain thus saith the Lord” from Scripture and on top of this, everyone will feel the internal prompting of the Holy Spirit to do what is right. God’s Two Witnesses will validate the testimony of Jesus for 1,260 days.⁶⁶

There is a second element in this special setting for the eternal gospel. The eternal gospel must be presented with *inspired* words. Human argument will not be sufficient. Spiritual things are spiritually understood.⁶⁷ Consider the current gridlock on Earth. One religious man cannot prove the superiority of his religious beliefs to another religious man. More people have been killed on Earth because of religion than for any other reason. Therefore, the Holy Spirit will give the testimony of Jesus’ penetrating power. Jesus will speak through the lips of the 144,000. The honest in heart will be troubled by the demand of the eternal gospel and they will be moved by the testimony of Jesus to obey His commands.⁶⁸ Worshiping the Creator will come with consequences, but don’t forget, defiance will also come with consequences. Everyone will be forced by circumstances to take a side because the world will be fully informed.⁶⁹ The Holy Spirit will convict the world of *sin, righteousness, and judgment*.⁷⁰ The honest in heart will be convicted that defying the eternal gospel is sin. They will worship Jesus as the Creator because it is the righteous thing to do (God’s will). Finally, everyone on Earth will be told that their eternal reward will be determined by his response to the eternal gospel. If a person defies

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the conviction of the Holy Spirit after hearing and seeing the clearest evidences of God's will, there is nothing further that God can do. The sinner has chosen defiance and committed the unpardonable sin.⁷¹

Babylon Unwittingly Serves God's Purpose

Babylon will form when the leaders of the world conclude that a unified response is necessary to appease God's wrath. God will use Babylon's ignorance, arrogance, and blasphemy to set the stage for a huge conflict. Babylon will create a series of "sin-less" laws that will produce unintended consequences. When it becomes clear that the 144,000 stand in opposition to Babylon's laws, Babylon will persecute the 144,000 and all who embrace the eternal gospel. Within the context of persecution, sin, righteousness, and judgment become very distinct and clear to the honest in heart. This is how the eternal gospel will go throughout the Earth as a testing truth. Everyone who puts his faith in Christ will be saved, all others will be destroyed at the Second Coming.⁷²

Faith and obedience are brother and sister. Salvation comes through faith and Jesus will *test the faith* of every person on Earth during the Great Tribulation.⁷³ Jesus said, "**If you love me, you will obey what I command.**"⁷⁴ Revelation 12:17 identifies the saints as "**those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**" *When obeying God comes with a price, obedience quickly becomes a matter of faith and love for God.*

There is a critical difference between salvation through works and salvation through faith. When a person obeys God's command, thinking that his obedience merits God's favor and salvation, salvation has become a matter of works. In God's sight, obedient sinners are just as guilty of sin as rebellious sinners, "**for the wages of sin is death.**"⁷⁵ On the other hand, when obedience is motivated by love to obey God and the sinner understands that his obedience does not merit God's salvation, this is salvation through faith! Faith means obeying God at all costs. Eternal life is almost immaterial!⁷⁶ Think about Jesus. Because He loved the Father and sinners, He submitted to the will of the Father and He perished without any hope of resurrection. What a perfect example of salvation through faith!

Faith in God is tested when the price of obedience becomes significant. This is why persecution plays an important role during the

Great Tribulation. When the people of Earth hear the eternal gospel proclaimed and when Babylon imposes punishment on those who obey the eternal gospel, faith will be tested. Who will love the Creator/Redeemer of mankind enough to worship Him on His holy day? Who will love the Creator/Redeemer of mankind enough to suffer persecution for His sake?⁷⁷

Upon hearing the eternal gospel, many Christians will discover like Peter, that they are initially unwilling to suffer for Christ's sake and they will find a way to justify their rebellion. Later on, these people will repent. Other Christians, like Judas, will remain angry and rebellious. They will not repent and will go to their death cursing God. Judas loved the gifts of the Giver instead of the Giver of the gifts. Judas became a predator and he betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. The eternal gospel will separate the people of Earth. The phrase, "obey and live, disobey and die" does not summarize the eternal gospel. Lucifer used this sound bite in Heaven to slander God's love. If a sound bite can summarize the eternal gospel, it could be, "When worship requires a price, I am willing to pay." Faith and love always submits to the will of God regardless of cost whereas defiance always justifies rebellion.

What Is Worship?

When the word worship is used as a verb, action is involved. For example, John fell at the angel's feet to worship him in Revelation 19:10. John bowed before the angel to show submission and loyalty, but the angel told John, "Do not do it!" When the angels in Heaven were tested with the eternal gospel, the Father required everyone to immediately bow down and worship Michael. Those believing that Michael was their Creator obeyed the Father's command. Doing as commanded is an *act* of worship. Those loyal to Lucifer remained standing; this was an *act* of defiance. Abel's obedience was an act of worship. Abel did as God commanded. He built an altar and offered the required lamb. God was pleased with his worship. Cain, on the other hand, built an altar and presented fruit. He presumed to worship God, but Cain insulted God. *A created being cannot dictate the terms of worship to his Creator!* It must be the other way around. Worshiping Jesus means obeying His commands and remaining loyal to Him.⁷⁸

Consider the creation of the Sabbath day for a moment. Human beings did not see Jesus create the Earth and all that is in it. Therefore, to commemorate His work, Jesus created a memorial to

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Creation Week. This memorial is the seventh day Sabbath.⁷⁹ To ensure the perpetuity of this memorial, Jesus declared the seventh day holy.⁸⁰ God's Sabbath is unlike the other six days of the week, it is holy (set apart). This memorial was created for the benefit of man.⁸¹ Not only is the Sabbath a day for physical rest and spiritual renewal, but it is also a reminder of our origin. The Sabbath was created to keep mankind from forgetting their Creator and their accountability to Him. It is interesting that from the very beginning, God has required human beings to honor something they did not see. Therefore, properly observing God's Sabbath is *an act that acknowledges the work of our Creator*.

Lucifer has done everything possible to eliminate all traces of God's memorial to creation. He has done this so that all mankind would forget Jesus and our accountability to Him. It is interesting that Muslims worship on Friday, Christians worship on Sunday, and Jews, who deny that Jesus is the Creator, worship on Saturday. The devil knows all about the eternal gospel (he lost his place in Heaven because of it). He knows that our faith in Christ will be tested and that God's Sabbath rest will become the focus of a great controversy all over the world during the Great Tribulation. He has been preparing to make war on the remnant of the woman for more than two hundred years. When Babylon rises to power, this war begins.⁸²

The Memorial Protected by Law

Jesus protected the sanctity of His Sabbath memorial with the force of law. He did this so that His memorial to creation would not be forgotten. Adam and Eve knew and observed the holiness of the Sabbath in the Garden of Eden before sin began. This statement is valid because Adam and Eve's first sin was not that of violating the holiness of God's Sabbath. After Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, the importance of observing God's Sabbath was passed down through the patriarchs. Adam, the first patriarch, lived for approximately 250 years after Methuselah was born and Methuselah died the year of the flood. Therefore, two men, who knew each other well, spanned the time between Creation Week and Noah's flood! The knowledge of God's holy Sabbath was not lost before the flood.

Even though the Garden of Eden remained on Earth until the flood, it would be fair to say that very few people observed God's seventh day Sabbath at the time of the flood.⁸³ Even though the

Bible does not explicitly say so, I assume that Noah observed God's holy Sabbath because Noah was a righteous man (a law abiding man) and He walked with God!⁸⁴ If Noah did not know about the holiness surrounding God's seventh day, Jesus would have told him. I am confident that Noah and his employees did not work on the ark on God's Sabbath. The Bible declares that God sent the flood in Noah's day because the world was full of gross degeneracy and endless wickedness.⁸⁵ Wickedness is unrighteous and unlawful behavior⁸⁶ and the salvation of eight people at the time of the flood indicates that very few people worshiped the Creator by resting from their labors on His holy day.

Prior to the Exodus (and the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai), the Lord tested Israel's faith by imposing His Sabbath rest upon them. (Exodus 5) This made Pharaoh furious! Then again, shortly after the Exodus (but prior to the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai), the Lord tested Israel with His Sabbath rest. (Exodus 16) A few weeks after the Exodus, the Lord Himself descended to Mt. Sinai to pronounce the Ten Commandments because Israel had been chosen to be the light of the world.⁸⁷ The holiness of God's seventh day Sabbath did not begin at Mt. Sinai. It began at Creation.⁸⁸

The two laws of love underlying the Ten Commandments are eternal. All created beings are required to love God supremely and their neighbors as themselves.⁸⁹ These two laws of love are amplified in the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments define love for God and the last six commandments define love for man. Mankind does not have the privilege of defining what love is and is not. God is love, He defines love. The Ten Commandments are called "a covenant"⁹⁰ because they contain a promise. The Lord has promised that the Ten Commandments are a reflection of what a born again person will *naturally want to do* when there is no rebellion in his heart.⁹¹

We know that the Ark of the Covenant will be presented to the world at the end of salvation's offer at the seventh trumpet.⁹² We know that Jesus wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger on two tablets of enduring stone.⁹³ We know that at the end of the Great Tribulation, there will be two groups of people. One group will worship the Creator on His holy Sabbath, the other group will worship Lucifer on a false sabbath.⁹⁴ The Ark of the Covenant will be visibly presented to the people of Earth as physical evidence confirming the Father's will. The test of worship

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will then be over. The saints are rewarded for their faith and the wicked are destroyed because of defiance.

God's Sabbath is far more than a holy day. When the Sabbath is ignored, the Creator is ignored. The devil knows that when a man or woman loses sight of his accountability before God, the result will be horrible. Sinners will lie, cheat, steal, kill, and commit adultery if they think they can get away with it. When people forget God, they behave in the most disgusting and despicable ways. Predators prey on the innocent and the weak. Children are abused and the elderly robbed or abandoned. Spiritual people can see the problem, but fools have no understanding. They say, "There is no God,"⁹⁵ but wise men know better. Many years ago the Russian philosopher Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote, "If I were called upon to identify the principal trait of the entire 20th century, I would be unable to find anything more precise than to reflect once again on how we have lost touch with our Creator. . . . Men have forgotten God."⁹⁶

Persecution and the Sabbath Rest Test

Earlier, it was said that Jesus tested the faith of the Israelites before the Exodus. He required His trustees to *rest* from their labors on His Sabbath⁹⁷ as a precondition to deliverance from Egypt. He did this to test their faith in Him. When worship requires a price, faith is revealed! The Israelites showed their regard for God's higher authority by resting on His holy day and their cessation from work was considered an act of defiance. Pharaoh severely persecuted his slaves.⁹⁸

This Exodus story has an end time parallel. Before Jesus delivers the saints from the bondage of sin (removes the carnal nature), He will test our faith by requiring us to rest from our labors on His seventh day Sabbath! Resting on God's Sabbath according to His commandment is an act of worship. In an effort to appease God's wrath, Babylon will make laws demanding that God be worshiped, but on days other than the Creator's Sabbath. The leaders of Babylon will become furious with God's saints because they will interpret worshiping the Creator on His holy day as an act of defiance.⁹⁹ It is interesting to anticipate how the seventh day Sabbath, an institution as old as Creation week and the divinity of Jesus, as Creator of Heaven and Earth, will become inflammatory topics during the Great Tribulation.

When the eternal gospel is set before mankind as a demand from God, a great controversy will arise and there will be a surprising outcome. The honest in heart will hear the 144,000. They will learn of Christ and His salvation and millions will embrace the eternal gospel and keep God's Sabbath holy even though they will be severely punished for it. A time is coming when the world will see devout Moslems, Jews, Hindus, Atheists, Baptists, Catholics, pagans, and others *worshipping Jesus* by resting on His Sabbath day! This amazing phenomenon will prove to the universe that the honest in heart are worthy of salvation because they are willing to do whatever God asks (once they know His will), regardless of the price or lifelong heritage.

Give Him Glory

The eternal gospel includes this phrase, '**and give Him glory.**' People give glory and praise to those they admire. Giving glory to Jesus is a righteous demand because He is our Creator, Redeemer, and Almighty God. He has done many things for mankind which no one else in the universe can do. He gave us life, but He was willing to cease to exist so that we might have His eternal life. Jesus has promised that sinners can overcome temptation if we will abide in Him and receive His strength. Jesus was tempted in every way as we are and He did not sin.¹⁰⁰ Jesus was tempted in ways that go beyond the human experience (such as turning stones into bread) and He did not fail. On the basis of Christ's perfect life and death, the Father reconciled the world unto Himself.¹⁰¹ Jesus overcame the world,¹⁰² and His victory assures us that we can have victory through His power. Therefore, "give Him glory" is a righteous demand. When the honest in heart hear and understand who Jesus really is, once they understand the love that He has bestowed on sinners and the victory that He has achieved for sinners, they will joyfully embrace Him and give Him glory! People like Pharaoh will stubbornly refuse. The wicked will submit to the laws of Babylon to avoid punishment. They justify their defiance for fear of punishment or suffering. The delivery of the eternal gospel by the 144,000 will produce many surprises and one of the biggest will be the response of family members and friends!

Babylon Suddenly Forms

Consider Earth's situation after the destruction caused by the first four trumpets. The whole world will look something like a giant ant hill that has been scalped by a lawnmower. People will

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be rushing around, confused and bewildered. They will be filled with anxiety, desperately looking for ways to survive. Some will be cursing God and others will be questioning God, trying to make sense of what happened. The leaders of the world will be feverishly working on a global plan to appease God's wrath. Religious diversity will cause great confusion at first, but eventually the leaders of the world will unite, naively creating a beast that will soon become a monster. The leaders of the world will create a one world crisis government. Babylon's stated purpose will be simple and singular: We must quickly appease God's wrath or we will all be destroyed.

During the first four trumpets, God's wrath will burn up (like Sodom and Gomorrah) a third of the Earth and then will destroy thousands of coastal cities. God's wrath will wipe out a continent and the heavens will turn so dark that crops cannot grow. The carnage will be indescribable. When 1.75 billion people die from these judgments and the survival of mankind looms large, the political and religious leaders of the world will get the picture. They will rightly conclude that man's sinful behavior has made Almighty God very angry, but they will wrongfully reason that if mankind's offensive behaviors are eliminated, God will be pleased and His judgments will cease. The political leaders of the world will agree to enforce whatever laws religious leaders might think appropriate and almost everyone will go along with Babylon's reasoning and demands – at first.

Three Enabling Lies

Babylon will justify its origin with three lies. The first lie will be this: Everyone on Earth worships *the same God*. Even though He is called by different names or given different titles, there is one God. This lie may sound reasonable, but nothing is further from the truth. The religions of the world do not know and worship Jesus and He is not to be confused with Allah or any other God. The first lie will enable religious and political leaders to unite on two core principles. First, all religions believe that God's wrath can be aroused by decadent and degenerate behavior. Second, all religions believe that Almighty God is entitled to respect and worship. These two principles will combine with the first lie to produce a second lie. The second lie will be this: God will be pleased when mankind unites and *enforces laws outlawing decadent and degenerate behavior*. They will think that every reduction in sinful

behavior will surely please The Almighty. Finally, the third lie supporting Babylon's theological framework will be this: God will be pleased when *one agency on Earth* represents all of the religions of the world. This "divinely appointed agency" can coordinate the worship and appeasement of The Almighty for all nations.

As the dust from the first four trumpets settles, everyone on Earth will be very afraid of God. A dramatic show of divine power on Day One and the overwhelming destruction caused by the first four trumpet events will change everything. Suddenly, mankind will face the reality of an angry God. The smouldering evidences of God's wrath will produce a knee-jerk religious revival. Not surprisingly, the people of the world will suddenly become "religious" after the first four trumpets, but they will be motivated by fear of more wrath to come. Ironically, the people of Earth, including the religious leaders of the world who claim to know the will of God, will not know that it will be more than two years before the fifth trumpet occurs. In other words, almost everyone will be anticipating more judgments to fall right away and even though a great religious awakening will take place, a great religious embarrassment will also unfold.

Millions of Christians who believe in a pretribulation rapture will be shocked to discover that their pastors and scholars have misled them. The deaths of 1.75 billion people will be unmistakable. The pretribulation rapture doctrine will vanish because it is fiction and a religious backlash will follow. On the other hand, millions of other Christians will be forced to admit that the seven trumpets did not occur in the past. These Christians will discover that their historical view of Revelation is fiction and a similar backlash will follow. Catholics will be shocked when they discover that their clergy know nothing about Bible prophecy. In Muslim countries, millions of people will sit in shocked silence. The Koran says nothing about the seven trumpets, nor does it explain God's final plans or the eternal gospel. Muslim clergy will say that Allah is definitely offended, but they have no further information on God's plans or the revealing of Jesus Christ as Almighty God. Meanwhile, the 144,000 will speak boldly. They will tell everyone about the seven trumpets of Revelation. They will explain the eternal gospel and their testimony will lead the honest in heart to conclude that the world's religious leaders know nothing about God, His Word, or His plans. This will be a bitter pill for many religious people to swallow. Like King Nebuchadnezzar, this discovery will make

Rev. 14:7

Rev. 14:8

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

many people angry at first.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, Babylon will form and it will issue a decree requiring everyone to worship Almighty God. Of course, Babylon's demand will sound very similar to the eternal gospel, but there will be a number of sharp differences.

The Second Angel's Message: An Inflammatory Message

{8} I saw a second angel descend from Heaven and orbit the Earth. He carried a message from Jesus that made the leaders of Babylon furious. He said in a loud voice, "Lies! Babylon the Great is promoting falsehood! The leaders of Babylon do not speak for God. Their presuppositions are false. Their endeavors are false. Their doctrines are blasphemy. They do not know God or His plans. Babylon has made all nations drunk with the delusion that men can appease God's wrath. This is a lie. The censer has been cast down. Corporately speaking, there is no return to God's grace. Babylon cannot save anyone or even itself. In fact, the Creator will destroy Babylon and all who obey its laws during the seven bowls."

The second angel's message will unite with the first angel's message and together, they will become an endless source of conflict and contempt for the 144,000. At first, the solution offered by Babylon will seem reasonable to most people on Earth.¹⁰⁴ Communal suffering will unite the religious and political leaders of the world. Local communities will want God's wrath to cease. A spiritual revival will spring up within each religious system on Earth like the world has never seen. People will turn to their religious experts for an explanation but the people will quickly learn that the leaders know nothing about God, His Word, or His plans. Like the 144,000, the leaders of Babylon will demand that everyone must worship God, but one question will be on everyone's heart. Who speaks for God? How does a world of diverse religions appease and worship one angry God?

False religion always exhibits two characteristics: First, it leads laymen to think that God is impressed with ritual, formal piety, and worship services; and second, the last resort of false religion is force. Actually, the opposite is true in both cases! In terms of salvation, rituals and sacraments are meaningless to God. They cannot produce salvation. Jesus is our Judge. He determines our salvation¹⁰⁵ after listening to the testimony of His Two Witnesses. The Holy Spirit tells Him if a person has a humble and contrite spirit.¹⁰⁶ Jesus only accepts the offerings of a cheerful giver.¹⁰⁷ Jesus sees the motives of each heart. The Holy Spirit reads each mind.¹⁰⁸ The Lord loves honesty and integrity.¹⁰⁹

Jesus hates sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed.¹¹⁰ Jesus is pleased when a person admits and confesses his sin¹¹¹ and makes restitution when/as necessary.¹¹² Jesus has promised eternal life to every overcomer because faith and works are inseparable!¹¹³ Faith in God means loving God enough to trust and obey Him no matter what the consequences may be.¹¹⁴

The first angel's message will demand that everyone worship the Creator. Genuine worship is an act of obedience. As God and Creator, Jesus has the prerogative to command His subjects to obey Him, but we can choose rebellion. If a person is willing to put His faith in Jesus and obediently follow His teachings,¹¹⁵ Jesus will give that person peace and serenity, not the temporal peace that the world gives.¹¹⁶ Jesus has the ability to satisfy each soul. He offers a better life and the gift of salvation to every person who will abide in Him.¹¹⁷

The second angel's message will be painfully divisive. It will drive a big wedge between relationships. In many cases, mother and father, brother and sister, husband and wife will take opposing stands. People cannot be saved according to church membership. People cannot be saved according to family membership. Each person has to be saved according to his own faith. Remember Jesus' words? **“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”**¹¹⁸

The leaders of Babylon will be adamant: Everyone who refuses to obey Babylon's dictates will be caught and severely punished. They will do this because they think that God's wrath against mankind will not cease until all forms of offensive behaviors are eliminated. Ironically, the leaders of Babylon will not realize that their actions are an insult to God! The 144,000 will rebuke the leaders of Babylon. They will speak plainly and with impressive authority. They will speak against the laws created by Babylon and this will put the honest in heart in a very difficult situation. Conflict will be everywhere. Multitudes will find themselves in a valley of decision. The consequences will be real: Obey God and be punished by Babylon or obey Babylon and be punished by God. This contest will require substantial faith in God or submission to Babylon will be inevitable.”

Rev. 14:8

Why Does God Permit Persecution?

Contrary to what many Christians believe, Jesus will put the final generation through an intense testing process. *Jesus will permit the final generation to determine its eternal destiny by choosing whom it will obey.* A test of obedience always reveals who has faith in God. Through the ages God has allowed His people to be tested because testing keeps them close to Him. “In fact,” Paul wrote, “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”¹¹⁹ Why must it be this way? When there are no trials and temptations, the carnal nature will quickly focus on self and wander away from God. Earlier in this book, we learned that God handed the saints over to the little horn for 1,260 years (538-1798).¹²⁰ Prior to this, God handed His people over to the Romans who severely persecuted them and even earlier, most of Christ’s disciples were martyred for their faith. Ever since Jesus lived on Earth, His followers have been persecuted. Christians living in Europe and the United States over the past two hundred years have been largely free of religious persecution and this explains, to a great extent, the rapid deterioration of Christianity.

Consider the following story of faith: King Nebuchadnezzar received a vision from God indicating that successive kingdoms would follow the kingdom of Babylon. In his vision, the king saw a man made of different metals. After receiving the vision, the king could not recall the vision and he demanded that his religious experts reveal the forgotten vision. They could not help him. Later, Daniel revealed and interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s vision.¹²¹ At that time, Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were given high positions over the wise men of Babylon. When word got out that the king had a vision indicating another kingdom would eventually overthrow Babylon, the king faced an enormous problem. He quickly moved to discredit the truth by erecting a giant image made of solid gold. (He wanted everyone to believe that his kingdom, represented by the head of gold, would endure forever.) He called the leaders of his empire together and demanded that everyone bow down and worship the golden image. When the music sounded everyone bowed down except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. (Daniel did not attend the service.) Their refusal to bow down and worship the image delighted the wise men and they immediately approached the king to taunt him with the rebellion of his Jewish officials:

“At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. . . . ‘But there are some *Jews whom you* have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon–Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego– who pay no attention to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.’ Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?’ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. [You well know that we worship The Creator of Heaven and Earth and He does not permit His subjects to bow down to idols or worship them.¹²²] **If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. *But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.***’ Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. [Because the governors of his empire were witnesses to their defiance, he had no choice but to order their death.] **He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.**”¹²³

The fire was so hot that it killed the soldiers that cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace, but the three men came out of the furnace without even a hint of smoke in their hair or clothing. What an amazing miracle! Although God can do marvelous things, He *does not usually honor* the faith of His faithful children with such a show of supernatural victory. Normally, Jesus is much more modest in dealing with the problems of His saints. He often resolves problems in subtle ways or He may even choose to let His saints perish and honor them later at

Rev. 14:8

the resurrection. His thoughtful and wise approach to each situation eliminates many problems later on. For example, if one desperate believer experiences a miracle and another desperate believer does not, what does this say about God to both believers and those who intimately know the circumstances in both situations? A miracle can have a terrible fallout. The believer without the miracle may conclude that he is unworthy, that God does not love him, or he lacks enough faith. On the other hand, the believer receiving the miracle may erroneously conclude that God answered his prayer because he did something right to gain God's favor or worse, that God loves him more than the one who did not receive a miracle.¹²⁴

By definition, a miracle occurs when the law of "cause and effect" is suspended. If God suspends the law of "cause and effect" too many times, people would be prone to ignore the rules of life and count on a miracle to save them from foolish decisions. This disconnect would create an irrational view of life which would produce a huge set of problems that do not exist. Jesus still produces miracles, but He is very careful about each miracle because He knows the potential for good and bad that each miracle can have. Because God's wisdom and love for His people is infinite and constant, He requires our faith in Him to be complete. He knows our needs before we cry out for help. He numbers the hairs on our head, and He knows our thoughts. If a miracle is needed in a given situation, He will produce it. If there is a better solution, He will produce that also.

God is pure in heart. God is love. His infinite wisdom is beyond comprehension. The remaining angels in Heaven have been studying God's words and actions for a very long time and they will testify to the redeemed someday that He *never* deviates from the best possible solution that a God of love can provide! For thousands of years they have been observing Him. It is their greatest joy to meet with Him and worship Him. There is nothing in the universe more interesting than the Godhead!

During the Great Tribulation, the saints will be surprised and encouraged by the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. They will find the Great Tribulation to be the worst of times and the best of times all at the same time. For about twenty-seven months, the 144,000 will proclaim the eternal gospel. They will denounce Babylon's doctrines and laws. Persecution will abound, but the suffering inflicted on the honest in heart will not be pointless. The Holy Spirit will do many things through

the 144,000. The sick will be healed, the blind will see, and the deaf will hear. The saints will be busy encouraging and helping new converts each day. Most of all, the saints will experience a camaraderie of love with other saints that words cannot express. When the wicked see the love that the saints have for one another, when they see the extent of their losses and suffering for God's truth, when they see the saints take a bold and deliberate stand for Jesus, many of the wicked will be moved to rethink the importance of the testimony of the 144,000. The Holy Spirit will use the persecution of God's people to soften many hearts and the result will be a harvest of a numberless multitude.¹²⁵

When two-thirds of the 1,335 days allotted to the Great Tribulation expire, the world will be in a most desperate condition. Famine and suffering will be everywhere. The misery index will be great. Most of the people on Earth will have heard and made a decision regarding the eternal gospel. Billions of people will have joined up with Babylon to receive rations and avoid persecution. Meanwhile, most of the saints will be in prison or fleeing from place to place to avoid capture. For 890 days, the 144,000 will faithfully present the first two angel's messages, but their endeavor will stall and come to a standstill a few weeks before the 890th day. Day after day, Jesus will continue to speak through the 144,000. The wicked will not listen and decide the price for worshipping Jesus is too great. The proclamation of the eternal gospel and the formation of Babylon will create three distinct groups of people around the world: The saints (those who will obey the commandments of God and believe the testimony of Jesus), the religious wicked (those who will obey the laws of Babylon), and the non-religious wicked (those who will refuse to obey the laws of God and the laws of Babylon).

When the 891st day of the Great Tribulation arrives, the fifth trumpet will sound in Heaven's temple.¹²⁶ The devil and his angels will be released from prison. They will rise quickly from the Abyss (the spirit realm)¹²⁷ and take flight. Masquerading as Almighty God, the Bible indicates the devil and his attending angels will *descend to Earth* in a great show of brilliance and power.¹²⁸ As the devil and his angels travel the world, they will imitate the Second Coming over and over. Lucifer and his angels will be seen approaching Earth for miles away. When they decide to leave a particular area, the devil and his angels will ascend into the sky as Jesus did when He returned to Heaven.

Rev. 14:9-10

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

This will be an over powering deception. It is interesting to notice that Lucifer and his angels will not be permitted to hover in the sky over Earth as Jesus will do at the Second Coming.¹²⁹ Lucifer's appearing will be a series of local events.¹³⁰ In other words, the devil and his entourage can only appear at one place at a time. As time goes by, the devil's fame and news of his appearing will grow.¹³¹ Huge crowds will go out to see him.

After descending from the sky,¹³² the devil will perform incredible signs and wonders,¹³³ even calling fire down out of Heaven,¹³⁴ to convince the multitudes that He is Almighty God.¹³⁵ God will not allow the 144,000 to perform this miracle and this overpowering delusion¹³⁶ will cause many of the non-religious wicked to join Babylon. Everywhere Lucifer goes, he will speak gracious words of hope and promise. He will feed the multitudes and heal the sick. He will be worshiped and adored as "Almighty God." Of course, the saints know the true identity of this glorious being and they will refuse to go out to see him.¹³⁷

The Third Angel's Message: An Ultimatum

{9} I saw a mighty angel descend from God's throne. As he orbited the Earth, he said in a loud voice, "Listen! Listen! If anyone worships Lucifer, if anyone participates in Lucifer's theocracy, if anyone receives Lucifer's tattoo on the forehead or on their right hand {10} that individual will drink the wine of God's wrath which has been poured full strength into the cup of His fury.

This is a very serious message and it will be presented to the wicked when Lucifer appears at the fifth trumpet. This message contains a promise. Everyone who obeys and worships Lucifer will experience the full fury of God's wrath. Everyone who receives the mark of the beast will be condemned to death. There will be no exception because once a person chooses to swallow the devil's poisonous lies, the victim will have no control over the outcome.¹³⁸ All who join up with Lucifer to carry out his evil schemes will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the Lamb and His holy angels.

{11} At the Second Coming, Jesus will ignite a lake of fire¹³⁹ and the leaders of Babylon, as well as all who were employed by Babylon. will be thrown alive into it.¹⁴⁰ Of course, everyone thrown into the fire will be consumed just as people are consumed in fires now, but the smoke from this lake of fire will ascend for a thousand years because this lake will burn as 'a memorial flame' for 1,000

years.¹⁴¹ “The rest of the wicked will be slain by a command (the sword) that came out of Jesus’ mouth. Their bodies will be left to rot in the streets and the birds will gorge themselves on their flesh.”¹⁴²

Consider a strange paradox: Even though the wicked will go along with Babylon’s demands to avoid punishment, they will not have any rest or peace of mind day or night. They will feel anxious and desperate the whole time. The Holy Spirit will do everything, short of violating the human will so that, if possible, the wicked might surrender their hearts to Jesus and be saved. How can there be love, joy, or peace when separated from God who is the Source of love, joy, and peace?”

{12} When the 144,000 deliver the third angel’s message, the intensity of persecution will grow and suffering will increase substantially. The 144,000 will outrage and highly offend those who obey and worship the devil as though he was “Almighty God” when the 144,000 say that Lucifer is the devil! This will enrage the wicked and they will pursue and persecute the people of God even more. Nevertheless, the 144,000 will be bold and fearless.¹⁴³ Meanwhile, the saints will be sustained by the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of God’s Word. They will be given divine strength and encouraged to be patient and faithful.

{13} When the sixth trumpet sounded in Heaven,¹⁴⁴ the fifth seal on The Book of Life was broken open.¹⁴⁵ There was a great deal of martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Then I heard a voice from Heaven say, “Write this down, John: The Lord will especially bless those saints who die for Him from *now on*.” “Yes,” says the Holy Spirit, “they will temporarily rest from their labors and suffering, for their deeds will surely follow them.”

This announcement indicates that a time has come for many of God’s saints to be put to death. Jesus permits a large number of saints to become martyrs for two reasons. First, their deaths will eventually cause some of the wicked to repent and be saved. Second, Jesus permits many of His saints to sleep through the rest of the Great Tribulation. However, all who die during the fifth seal will be resurrected a few days early to see the Second Coming of Jesus. Those who put Jesus on the cross will also be resurrected at the same time to see Jesus appear in clouds of glory.¹⁴⁶

Rev. 14:11

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Rev. 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Rev. 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Rev. 14:13

The End of Salvation

Before continuing with verse 14, we need to review a few facts so we can truly appreciate the contents of verse 13. When the devil physically appears at the fifth trumpet, many of the non-religious wicked will convince themselves that Lucifer and his angels are a religious apparition of some kind and they will refuse to honor Lucifer as Almighty God. However, most of the non-religious wicked will have a change of mind when the devil's demons begin to attack them and afflict them with searing pain. The pain that will be inflicted on the non-religious wicked is worse than the sting of a scorpion! The victims will long to die, but they cannot.¹⁴⁷

Lucifer's demons will freely use torture to force resistant and undecided people into worshipping the devil. The devil's objective will be the elimination of all non-religious people, but the 144,000 will proclaim that the torment inflicted by the demons proves that Lucifer is not God, but the devil! A God of love will never accept forced worship! Many will chose to obey and worship Lucifer to avoid further suffering, but force is always the last resort of false religion. The 144,000 will explain to the non-religious wicked that in Christ, there is freedom.¹⁴⁸ If a person puts his faith in his Creator and obeys the eternal gospel, that person will receive the seal of God and the assurance of eternal life. Of course, the non-religious wicked will also see that the saints are protected from Lucifer's attacks¹⁴⁹ during the fifth trumpet and this will convince many in that group to surrender their hearts to their Creator.¹⁵⁰ At the end of the fifth trumpet, the world will be reduced to two groups of people: The saints, who obey the commandments of Jesus and the testimony of Jesus, and the religious wicked, who obey the commandments of Babylon and the testimony of Lucifer. The persecution of the non-religious wicked during the fifth trumpet will eliminate this entire group.

I believe the sixth trumpet will sound in Heaven on the 1,039th day of the Great Tribulation.¹⁵¹ At this time, Lucifer will suddenly change character. Overnight, he will set aside His masquerade as a generous and benevolent God to become a ruthless dictator. He will demand the creation of a counterfeit theocracy because there is no room for religious diversity when "God" dwells among men. He will set himself up as king of kings and lord of lords and there is nothing that mankind can do to stop or thwart the actions of the devil.

The devil will suddenly dissolve the religious systems and governments of the world. He will set up a one world church state. He will instruct his forces to divide the population of the world into groups of one thousand and then, after selecting one person from each unit of 1,000, he will demand one-third of each group be killed.¹⁵² The devil will announce that the first 666 people to receive his mark (a tattoo) from each group will be allowed to live. Those who wish to be saved must swear allegiance to him and his government by voluntarily wearing a tattoo on the right hand showing “666.” The carnage that follows will be degenerate, disgusting, and sickening. Millions of God’s people will be captured and killed.¹⁵³ A much larger number of the devil’s followers will also be slain to meet the quota. The devil and his demons will be very pleased with their deadly achievement.

When the sixth trumpet ends, the population of Earth will be less than 50% of what it was when the censer was cast down. When the sixth trumpet ends, the 1,260 days allotted to the work of God’s Two Witnesses will end. The work and testimony of the 144,000 will be finished. During the sixth trumpet, the 144,000 will faithfully deliver the fourth angel’s message. This message calls for everyone to come out of Babylon and defy Lucifer’s authority. By the end of the sixth trumpet, circumstances will force everyone into a firm decision. There will be no turning back. Two distinct groups of people will live on Earth, a small group of sheep and a large number of goats.

The results of the third and fourth angel’s messages will be encouraging. Many people will reconsider the eternal gospel during the fifth trumpet and they will join with the saints in worshipping the Creator. Then, during the sixth trumpet, the 144,000¹⁵⁴ will present God’s final message¹⁵⁵ to the world and even at this late hour, a few more people will favorably respond. They will put their faith in Christ and receive the seal of God. By the time the 1,260 days of the Two Witnesses end, every decision will have been firmly made. Most, if not all of the 144,000 will be dead; their testimony is finished because God’s offer of salvation has done all it can do.

{14} In front of me was a white cloud. I saw Jesus sitting on the cloud. He had a crown of gold (Greek: *stephanos*, crown of victory) on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. {15} An angel came out of the temple bringing a message from the Father. He called to Jesus, “Wave your sickle over the Earth because the harvest is ripe.”

Rev. 14:13

Rev. 14:14

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Rev. 14:15-16

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Rev. 14:17-20

And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and

{16} So Jesus waved His sickle over the Earth and the offer of salvation ended.

This solemn scene marks the close of redemption. Like the door on Noah's ark, the door to eternal life will be shut.¹⁵⁶ Consider two important features: First, at the end of the sixth trumpet, the Holy Spirit will review every heart on Earth and once He determines that every decision is firmly made, He will inform the Father there is nothing further that He can do. The Father will send word to Jesus *when* to terminate the offer of salvation and close the door to eternal life. Second, all possibility of redemption ends *prior* to the seven last plagues *because everyone will either have the seal of God or the mark of the beast. Those having the mark of the beast are incorrigible because they committed the unpardonable sin.*¹⁵⁷

{17} Then I saw another mighty angel come out of the Heavenly temple. He also had a sharp sickle in his hand. {18} Then, another angel in charge of the fire at the Altar of Burnt Offering called to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from Earth's vineyard, because the grapes are ripe, ready to be crushed in the winepress of God's wrath." {19} The angel swung his sickle over the Earth and everyone having the mark of the beast was eternally condemned. These people will be crushed in the great winepress of God's wrath during the seven last plagues. {20} I also saw that everyone having the mark of the beast would be crushed in the winepress of God's wrath *outside* the city. The number of wicked people thrown into the winepress of God's wrath was so great that blood flowed out of the press as high as the horses' bridles for a distance as long as the length of the nation of Israel (from top to bottom, about 180 miles).

This phrase, "outside the city" means the wicked will be "cut off" from having any inheritance. There is no safety outside the city of refuge! The wicked will not be allowed to enter the New Earth.

{15:1} I saw seven angels holding seven bowls, these bowls contain seven *last* plagues. These seven judgments will serve as the winepress of God's wrath. These plagues are called "last," because they follow the seven trumpets (seven first plagues) and they will utterly crush the wicked and destroy the planet as well. {2} Then, I saw a great expanse supporting the throne of God. It looked like a sea of glass mixed with sparkling fire.¹⁵⁸ Standing beside the sea of glass were the 144,000. They had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They had faithfully accomplished the mission given to them and they had been taken to Heaven on the 1,265th day of the Great Tribulation. They held harps that God had given to them {3} and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Your ways are just and true, King of the Ages."

cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Rev. 15:1-3

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty;

*just and true are
thy ways, thou
King of saints.*

Rev. 15:4-6

*Who shall not
fear thee, O Lord,
and glorify thy
name? for thou
only art holy: for
all nations shall
come and wor-
ship before thee;
for thy judgments
are made mani-
fest. And after
that I looked,
and, behold, the
temple of the tab-
ernacle of the tes-
timony in heaven
was opened: And
the seven angels
came out of the
temple, having
the seven plagues,
clothed in pure
and white linen,
and having their
breasts girded
with golden
girdles.*

{4} Referring to the wicked who were about to be crushed in the winepress of God's wrath, the 144,000 sang, "Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. People from all nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts of vengeance have been revealed." {5} After the 144,000 finished singing, I looked and the temple, that is, the tabernacle containing the Ark of the Testimony, was opened. {6} Out of the temple came the seven angels who stand before God.¹⁵⁹ They were carrying seven bowls which contain seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests. Their clothing and golden sashes indicated they were sent from Almighty God, sent on an honorable and righteous mission. They were commissioned by the Creator of Heaven and Earth to avenge the great suffering of His saints." Jesus said, "**'It is mine to avenge; I will repay.'**" "**The Lord will judge [avenge] his people.' It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'**"¹⁶⁰

The Rules of Interpretation

Consider how the Rules of Interpretation (discussed in the Introduction) are observed in this prophecy:

Rule One says an apocalyptic prophecy has a beginning point and ending point in time and the events within the prophecy occur in the order given." This prophecy conforms to Rule One because chronological order is self evident.

1. God sends an outright demand (first angel's message)
2. God sends an inflammatory declaration (second angel's message)
3. God sends an ultimatum (third angel's message)
4. God's offer of salvation comes to an end (end of salvation)
5. The victory celebration of the 144,000

Rule Two says a fulfillment only occurs when all of the specifications are met, and this includes the order stated in the prophecy. Even though the three angel's messages have been understood for a while, they have not been set before mankind as a testing truth. The elements described in this prophecy have not begun. The judgment of the living does not begin until the censer is cast down. Babylon does not rise until the Great Tribulation begins and Lucifer does not appear until the fifth trumpet sounds. Finally, the 144,000 have not begun their ministry. Therefore, this prophecy has not been fulfilled.

Rule Three says that apocalyptic language can be literal, analogous or symbolic. To reach the intended meaning of a prophecy, the reader must consider (a) the context, (b) the use of parallel language in the Bible, and (c) if an element is thought to be symbolic, the Bible must interpret the symbol with a *relevant* text. The language used in this prophecy is not symbolic because there are no relevant texts defining a symbol. On the other hand, we do find an extensive use of analogous and literal language. For example, the three angels orbiting the Earth represent three messages from God that will be heard around the world. The three angel's messages are self-explanatory once we understand the setting in which they are delivered. The scene where Jesus waves His sickle over the Earth because the harvest is ripe uses language that is analogous with a harvest. The "winepress of God's wrath" is easy to understand. Grapes are crushed in a winepress and indeed, God's wrath will crush the wicked who live during the seven bowls.

Rule Four is not used in this prophecy.

References:

1. Revelation 11:6
2. Revelation 8:5
3. Revelation 14:9-11; 19:19-21
4. Revelation 18:1-5 See Prophecy 15.
5. Revelation 13:8; Matthew 12:31,32
6. Revelation 14:14-19
7. Revelation 22:11
8. Romans 8:6-8
9. John 16:1-3; 15:20,21
10. Revelation 1:9
11. Revelation 11:7,8; 16:4-6
12. John 14:10,24,31
13. Revelation 15:2-6
14. Revelation 15:2, italics mine
15. Revelation 8:3-5
16. For further discussion on this assertion, please see pages 22-24 in my book, *A Study on the Seven Trumpets, Two Witnesses and Four Beasts* or you may freely download the article at: <http://www.wake-up.org/Revelation/724Book.pdf>.
17. Ibid. Pages 12-15.
18. John 5:22,23; 6:46; Philippians 2:6; Isaiah 40:25-28; Nehemiah 9:5-7
19. Matthew 4:10
20. Colossians 1:16
21. John 5:22,23; 2 Corinthian 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; Matthew 24:14
22. John 1:1-14; Colossians 1:13-19
23. Matthew 24:14; Revelation 3:10
24. See pages 152-174 in my book, *A Study on the Seven Seals and The 144,000*. Or you may freely download this article at: <http://www.wake-up.org/Revelation/Rev144.htm>
25. Philippians 2:6

26. John 5:22,23; 1 Timothy 6:16
27. John 5:22,23; Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 14:7
28. John 16:15
29. Philippians 2:6
30. Psalm 2:7-12; John 6:38; 10:18
31. Isaiah 53:2
32. Matthew 8:20
33. Hebrews 4:15
34. For further discussion on the identity of Michael, please see pages 22-29 in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega*. <http://www.wake-up.org/Alpha/Chapter2.htm>
35. Colossians 1:15; John 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16
36. 1 Timothy 6:16
37. Acts 17:28
38. Genesis 2:21,22
39. John 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16
40. Ezekiel 28:12-15
41. Ezekiel 28:14; Daniel 10:13 Note: Although the Bible does not state a number, this author concludes there were two chief princes in Heaven, e.g., two guardian cherubs – Michael and Lucifer. After the expulsion of Lucifer, it is understood that Gabriel took his place. See also John 12:31; 14:30; Luke 1:19.
42. Genesis 2:17 (KJV)
43. See comments on Revelation 5:4.
44. Luke 10:18
45. Job 38:4-7
46. Psalm 33:9
47. Exodus 6:3; Romans 16:25
48. 1 John 5:4 See Appendix D.
49. Colossians 1:16
50. Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:8, 17,18
51. Acts 4:12
52. John 14:9

53. Romans 8:32-39
54. Genesis 11:1-9
55. Genesis 10:25
56. Exodus 5:1,2
57. Exodus 7:1-5
58. Daniel 4:34-37
59. Revelation 11:6
60. John 8:44
61. Matthew 24:14
62. Revelation 11:5,6; Acts 14:3
63. Romans 9:25,26; 2:28,29; Galatians 3:28,29
64. Acts 10:28-34
65. Acts 17:26,27; Romans 5:12
66. Revelation 11:3
67. 1 Corinthians 2:14
68. Matthew 27:19; John 10:16; Revelation 1:2; 12:17;
14:11,12; Matthew 7:28,29
69. Revelation 14:9,10; 21:7,8; Matthew 24:14,25,26; 5:11,12
70. John 16:1-13
71. Matthew 12:31,32
72. Revelation 19:19-21
73. Revelation 3:10
74. John 14:15
75. Romans 6:23
76. Daniel 3:14-18
77. Matthew 5:11; 19:29
78. Revelation 12:17
79. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11
80. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 16:23-30
81. Mark 2:27,28
82. Revelation 13:5-8

83. We know that Eden is called, “the garden of God.” (Ezekiel 28:13) We also know that Eden remained on Earth after Adam and Eve were cast out. See Genesis 3:22-24, 4:16 and compare with Ezekiel 31:16-18. At the flood, this author assumes that God took Eden to Heaven to save it for the Earth made new. Compare Revelation 22:1-3 with Genesis 2:10. It is possible that the *same* Tree of Life that Adam and Eve once enjoyed will be found in the New Earth.
84. Genesis 6:9
85. Genesis 6:5,12
86. 1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15
87. Exodus 20:3-17; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Matthew 5:14
88. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11
89. Matthew 22:36-40
90. Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; Numbers 14:44
91. Hebrews 8:10-12
92. Revelation 11:19; 15:5,6
93. Exodus 31:18
94. Revelation 13:15
95. Psalm 14:1
96. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *National Review*, July 22, 1983
97. See Exodus 5. For a discussion on this topic, please see Chapter 9 “What Happened to the Lord’s Day?” in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega* or you can freely download this article at: <http://www.wake-up.org/Alpha/Chapter9.htm>.
98. Exodus 5:14-22
99. Revelation 13:4-8; 18:1-24
100. Hebrews 4:15
101. Romans 5:10
102. John 16:33
103. Daniel 2:9-13
104. Revelation 13:3
105. John 5:22
106. Psalm 51:17

107. 2 Corinthians 9:7
108. 1 Chronicles 28:9; Romans 8:27
109. Leviticus 19:35,36
110. Colossians 3:5,6
111. 1 John 1:9
112. Matthew 5:23,24
113. Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7,8
114. Hebrews 11
115. John 15:14
116. John 14:27
117. John 15:4-11
118. Matthew 10:37-39
119. 2 Timothy 3:12
120. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:6,14
121. Daniel 2
122. Exodus 20:4-6
123. Daniel 3:8,12-20, insertions and italics mine
124. See John 9.
125. Revelation 7:9
126. Revelation 9:1-11
127. Revelation 12:9
128. Revelation 9:3
129. Revelation 1:7
130. Matthew 24:23-28
131. Daniel 8:9
132. Revelation 9:2,3
133. Revelation 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12
134. Revelation 13:13
135. 2 Thessalonians 2:4
136. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12
137. Matthew 24:24-27
138. Jeremiah 25:15-18; John 18:11; Luke 22:42
139. Revelation 19:19-21

140. God holds leaders to a higher standard of accountability. Numbers 25:3-5; Deuteronomy 32:35-43; Revelation 18:8-10; Isaiah 29:15-20
141. Revelation 20:10
142. Revelation 19:15-18
143. Revelation 11:5,6
144. Revelation 9:13
145. Revelation 6:9-11
146. Matthew 26:64; Revelation 1:7.
147. Revelation 9:5,6
148. 2 Corinthians 3:17
149. Revelation 9:4
150. Compare the scene in Revelation 9:6 with the story found in Numbers 21:4-9.
151. This date is calculated. In keeping with God's use of one-third and two-thirds during the seven trumpets, it is assumed that Jesus protects Earth from Lucifer and his angels by keeping them in the Abyss for two-thirds of the 1,335 days. If so, the devil and his angels will appear on the 891st day, a new moon. Five months of torment amounts to 148 days counting inclusively (29.53 days per month x 5 months = 148 days).
152. Revelation 9:15
153. The fourth message will be examined in Prophecy 14.
154. Revelation 6:9-11
155. Revelation 18:1-5
156. Matthew 25:1-13
157. Revelation 14:9,10
158. Ezekiel 1:22-28
159. Revelation 8:2
160. Hebrews 10:30,31