

## Revelation Step by Step, 4

Half way through the 7 years of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27), the Beast will arrive at Jerusalem in full power, *with* His armies, Luke 21:20-21, ‘**And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.**’ Matthew 24:21, ‘**For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.**’

We find more by putting all the scriptures together, Isaiah 28:10, ‘**For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.**’

I don’t think most people accept or realise how much God has asked of these faithful people, who end up fleeing Jerusalem. Firstly, most, even of the faithful today, find it hard to accept that *they* may actually have a part to play in these astounding events!

At this stage to most, it seems divorced from reality that they may be the people mentioned here; that they may be the ones fleeing from Jerusalem into the wilderness West of the Dead Sea where Jesus Christ was tempted of the Devil; that they may be the ones carrying all they possess, even a few with babies, along with a little water and food, while supporting the old and infirm, into such a hostile environment. They may be right of course because we don’t yet know the timing, but that is no reason to deny the possibility, and the need for plans!

Recently in Israel, I went to explore the possible routes they may take, but I failed. It was just too hot and dry in the totally barren wilderness of rock and sand in the summer heat, and as I was alone, and feeling my age, it quickly seemed foolish. But for them it will be much cooler at the time of the Spring barley harvest, for I have seen it snow at that time, and God has promised once again to provide, Isaiah 48:21, ‘**They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and the water gushed out.**’

To most observers though, it will seem madness. So far we have seen they have sold everything and travelled from safety into what is regarded as a dangerous land, to carry out the results of what at the time of their departure seemed impossible – the invasion and destruction of the US, UK and Commonwealth lands, to provide a broadcast of hope in God’s coming Kingdom, from Jerusalem. They had been gradually defeated in that broadcast by the growing power of the Beast, until they were compelled to flee for their lives into an impossible wilderness!

But their message gave strength to those about to perish in captivity, and they know that God will replace *their* encouragement with that of the Two Witnesses for the *last* 3½ years. Their effort was the *sacrifice* which the Beast *causes to cease*, and at his forced and uninvited entry into their congregation, *the temple* of God's Church in Jerusalem, 'He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.' 2 Thessalonians 2:4. We saw in step 3 that today, true Christians have replaced the Jews and *are* the Temple of God, the very sanctuary of God's Holy Spirit.

They had proved their obedience to God's specific command in Jeremiah 3:6-10, and their love for their captive brethren by their daily sacrifice; for some, even by their martyrdom at the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal, and now, some 30 days later (Dan.12:11) *all* their lives are in God's hands as they flee Jerusalem!

Having known and expected this for three years, God's people will have prepared and researched several routes through the Judaeian wilderness, but it will still pose problems, Luke 21:23, 'Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.'

The problem is that the resurrection is nearing, (1Thessalonians 5:4) when we will be changed into spirit beings, 1 Corinthians 15:52, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.' What will happen then, for those with babies?

God's people will flee to Tekoa, a village about 12 miles to the South, warning believing Jews to join them before the Beast's armies completely surround Jerusalem, Jeremiah 6:1, 'O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, [Haifa] and great destruction.' (Jeremiah here speaks to Israel and Judah in the future, 6:5,15, 20, for at that time, the ancient house of Israel, the Ten Tribes, had been carried away in captivity by the Assyrians almost 100 years previously.)

Finding that they have escaped into the wilderness of Judaea, West of the Dead Sea, they will be closely pursued by an army of their enemy, the Beast, who has hated their warning broadcasts repeating the third angel's message about him, from Jerusalem, Revelation 14:9, 'And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone (It hasn't reached this stage yet) worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.'

The result is Revelation 12:15, 'And **the serpent** cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.' God here refers to Satan, who, from now on, is driving the King of the North, or Beast.

The events of the Sixth Seal are about to arrive! Luke 21:25, 'And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.' Joel 2:30-31, 'And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before the great and the terrible day of the LORD** come.' Revelation 6:12-14, 'When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.'

At these signs, the pursuing army will become fearful, but the Saints remember Luke 21:28, 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.' These are the events they have read of in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6 and 14, leading up to the resurrection. Revelation 14:15-16, 'Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand. And another angel came out of the temple [in Heaven], calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So he who sat on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.'

All will fall to the ground when the earth first trembles and then begins to shake violently, rocks falling down upon the distant army. The darkened sky will be suddenly rent apart with a great tearing sound and the clouds roll back like waves, revealing an awesome blue light surrounding a great throne, upon which sits the appearance of the glory of the Lord. (Ezekiel 1:26-28). Revelation 6:14, 'The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.'

All around the world, the same tremors cause people to remember the warning of the First Angel to repent before the "Great and Tribulation" comes upon them, which most had forgotten over the last 3 eventful and horrific years. Revelation 6:16, 'And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the **wrath of the Lamb.**'

The awesome figure on the throne begins to move and at this sight, a great cry of joy erupts from God's people, but confusion and fear strikes the pursuing army, as the awesome figure descends towards the cowering troops, Psalm 18:9-11, 'He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon

a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.'

As the tremors calm, God's people rise from their knees to see what seems to be a great storm of hail and fire poured out upon the pursuing army, verses 12-14, 'At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.'

But that is not all. The earth itself is then torn apart, and with a great roar the army is swallowed up in a cloud of dust. As the people stare in horror, the dust gradually clears, but not a sign of the distant army remains, Revelation 12:16, 'And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.'

While the people stand in silent awe, the earth is filled with the sound of a great trumpet blown by the Lord Himself. This is *not* the angel of Revelation 11:15! Zechariah 9:14, 'And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and **the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet**, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.'

Angels will be seen descending from the throne above, taking those Saints by the hand whose bodies change before the eyes of the onlookers into glowing forms, still recognisable but somehow quite different, and ascend with them to the Sea of Glass in the clouds, on which is the throne, along with all those who have been resurrected at the same time, worldwide, Matthew 24:30-31, 'Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

1Thessalonians 4:15-17, 'For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and **so shall we ever be with the Lord**'.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 'Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.' As W E Vine explains in his Expository Dictionary, at the resurrection, "the *last trump* is **a military allusion**", familiar [then] to the Jews as a reference to

Numbers 10:7, the last trump in a series, “and has no connection with the series in Revelation 8:6 – 11:15.”

Tears appear in the eyes of some who remain, as the realisation dawns upon them that *they* are not changed, or gathered by the angels to the Sea of Glass. Where *they* go then (including those with babies), and how Christ rescues them, is explained in our Article, ‘Christ Goes to Petra’, Page One, Articles.

This is the resurrection God’s firstfruit Saints have long awaited, at the very time of the firstfruit barley harvest in Israel, just 3½ years before Christ’s final return *with* His Saints at the Feast of Trumpets. Then, at Christ’s return *with* His new Bride, an angel, not God, blows the trumpet, Revelation 11:15, ‘**And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.**’ There is no confusion in the *Biblical* account when we put the scriptures together!

All the resurrected Saints are gathered by the angels to the Sea of Glass, still visible in the clouds, from where, with Christ, they are carried to God’s Throne in Heaven. Revelation 14:1-3, ‘**And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.**’ Hebrews 12:22, ‘**But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.**’

There they will be carefully prepared for their future role as the Bride of Christ and Kings and Priests on the earth, educated by Jesus Christ Himself, just as were His 12 disciples over their years with Him, so that they too will experience the maturity we recognise in the Apostles after Christ’s ascension. There they will see the Angels receive the golden vials to pour out upon the earth, Revelation 15:2,6-7, ‘**And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.**’ 6-7, ‘**and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,**’

Will their marriage take place possibly some weeks after their arrival, at the Feast of Pentecost, or at one of the other Feasts of Pentecost which they will experience in Heaven? We aren’t told, but it has to be one of them, Revelation 19:7-9, ‘**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and**

his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.'

These 3½ years of intense learning will provide all the knowledge Christ's Bride needs to carry out the various roles for which they have qualified, Luke 19:17, 'And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.' And Revelation 22:12, 'And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.'

In conclusion, some of us will need considerable equestrian education to handle a large war-horse before returning to the Earth with Jesus Christ, just before Armageddon! Revelation 19:14, 'And the armies which were in heaven followed him **upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**' At last, the time of preparation is over. Christ's rule with His Bride, upon the Earth in the Kingdom of God, is about to begin, though we have yet to examine the events there during the awful 3½ years of the Great Tribulation!

To be continued in Step 5.

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