

CHAPTER FOUR - PART FOUR

WHAT TIME IS IT?

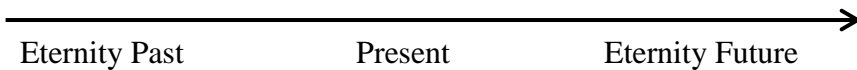
Since God is omniscient, there is no such thing as an unknown event to Him.

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9, 10)

God planned the end from the beginning of time. The end is revealed in the beginning of **Genesis** within the six days of work. The six days followed by a seventh day of rest foreshadow six thousand years, followed by a seventh one-thousand year period of rest. God's revelation to man is structured around this foundation, pointing to a coming *seventh day of rest* -- namely, the future Messianic Era. The following *eighth day* marks the beginning of the Eternal Ages.

God's supreme wisdom is shown declaring the end from the beginning in a "type," which is seen in the first few pages of the Book of **Genesis**. In light of His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence, we can realize that God's view of time and space, along with its components, is not limited.



For example, as you see the line-graph above, you are able to view the entire graph at once. You can see events in eternity past, present and eternity future all at the same time.

In like manner, God is able to view the future, as well as the present and past, and declare the end from the beginning. It is absolutely astounding! And before the foundation of the world, all of God's works were planned

and completed. God planned everything with man's redemption in view, from eternity past to eternity future.

Though we do not know the exact day and hour in which the Lord will return, God did provide prophetic insight to His prophets, revealing many signs in Scripture to give us ample warning of the nearness of His return. Many Bible students have prophesied on the actual date of the time of the end, yet none have succeeded. We are not to be consumed with the exact day and hour of His return. Rather, we are warned throughout Scripture to be well prepared for His return, ready to stand unashamed at the Judgment seat of Christ.

Everything in Scripture moves toward the goal of the coming kingdom, things having to do with Christian preparedness in view of Christ's return. Christians are to watch for Him daily and be prepared with good works.

The words concerning the redemption of the inheritance during the time of the end have been *closed up and sealed until the time of the end* (**Daniel 12:9**); and, at that time, the Lamb of God will be proclaimed by His angels to be worthy to open the seals and fulfill all prophecy once and for all (**Revelation 5:5**). The signs of the times, however, do reveal the close proximity of the end-time so that we can be prepared:

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';

and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. 'Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.'"

(Matthew 16:1-3)

God had revealed His plans and purposes to His prophets, which were written in His Word, including the sequence in which His plans will come to pass:

Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. (**Amos 3:7**)

And through the Word, God reveals these secrets to Christians.

When God dealt with man in the past and closed a dispensation in judgment, He always gave ample warning. He gave many signs to make it evident that some great event was about to take place. The building of the Ark and Noah's preaching was a sure sign before the Flood. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent angels to warn believers to flee to the mountains.

When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem riding on a donkey accompanied by His followers as they held the palms, all of Israel should have perceived this sign as revealing their Messiah who would enter the city, be crucified, and be resurrected. The Jews were given ample warning in the Old Testament Scriptures, as seen in **Zechariah 9:9**:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.

And just as it was then, so it is in our generation. God has given us signs of His coming and of the end of this age.

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" **(Matthew 24:3)**

And the reason that Jesus wanted them to know the signs of His coming was so that *"no one deceives you"* -- because of false Christs and false prophets. Likewise, Christians can know the nearness of the Lord's return through the signs of the times. Christians, though, cannot know the day nor the hour, for this has been reserved for God only.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." **(Matthew 24:36)**

The way in which this verse reads (in the English text) has left many with the thought that even Christ Himself did not know the day and hour of His

return, which would be a contradiction upon His deity. Because of this, many theologians have attempted to place limitations in connection with Christ's incarnation, having appeared in the "likeness of sinful flesh" on earth. However, this verse actually teaches something quite different. Correctly translated, this verse is directly addressing the deity of Christ, revealing to the disciples that He was exactly who He claimed to be – God. The Greek words "*ei me*," translated "but" in both **Matthew 24:36** and **Mark 13:32** really mean "if not" [The Greek word *ei* means "if," and the Greek word *me* means "not."]. This verse then could be understood to mean, "If I were not God as well as man, even I would not know the day nor the hour." Therefore, **Mark 13:32** corrected would read:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, if not the Father."

In other words, Jesus said that if He were not the Father He would not know. However, Jesus is the Father and therefore He does know this and all things.

One of the prophetic signs concerning Christ's second return is revealed in **Matthew 24:32-34** in the Parable of the Fig Tree:

Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near---at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

This passage refers to events mentioned in **Matthew 24:29-31**. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will return and gather the Jews from the four corners of the earth, bringing them back into their land. At this time, Israel will be restored as a nation again, and *this* event is a sign of the end of the age. Jesus said that the generation that sees the fulfillment of these wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes [*shaking of nations*], followed by Israel becoming a nation again, will see His return.

“*All these things*” mentioned in **Matthew 24:1-31**, which are to take place in this generation, includes the Tribulation, the Antichrist and the appearance of Christ in glory. And prior to these events of the Tribulation, the Church will be removed from the earth, known as “the rapture.”

In looking at all three dispensations, the author believes that Man’s Day of six thousand years is soon coming to a close. From the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ around 33 A.D. until the end of this present dispensation totaling 2,000 years marks the near end of Man’s Day. The signs in Scripture give ample warning concerning the end of the age. Thus, we should prepare ourselves for His return at any moment.

The Book of **Daniel** is a testimony showing how God works out His promises through His servants even in the courts of pagan rulers. Daniel was given understanding and visions to foresee future events at the end of Man’s Day.

Daniel’s visions for the Seventy Weeks Prophecy were given by God during the Babylonian exile and during the reign of Darius in 539 B.C., after the temple had been destroyed in 586 B.C., and for the purpose of foretelling future events concerning the end of the age. Actually, all of the Book of **Daniel** is prophecy concerning the time of the end, which is further understood in corresponding passages, and which are revealed in the companion Book of **Revelation**. Therefore, we will begin the seventy weeks prophecy from Daniel’s time and follow it through to the close of this age.

THE SEVENTY-WEEKS PROPHECY

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore, consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. (Daniel 9:20-27)

In **Daniel 9:1**, Daniel prayed to the Lord, requesting that He bless the city of Jerusalem and the people of Israel. It was 539 B.C. Daniel had no temple to go to, for it had been destroyed; therefore, he asked God to restore the temple and rebuild the city. Then, in **Daniel 9:21**, the angel Gabriel came to him, telling him that at the beginning of Daniel's prayer and request to God, the command went out to give him the vision of the end times, that the temple would be restored and the city rebuilt.

The first temple, built by Solomon, was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In 516 B.C., the temple was rebuilt. This second temple was lavishly renovated by Herod the Great and completed in 64 A.D. In 70 A.D., the temple was completely destroyed and the nation of Israel was once again dispersed. The seventy years of the desolations of Jerusalem spoken through Jeremiah pointed to the Seventy weeks prophecy of 490 (seventy times seven) years -- then the end will come.

...that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (Daniel 9:2)

In **Daniel 9:24**, the prophecy begins with the revealing of the time of the end: “*Seventy weeks are determined*” for the people of Israel and for the holy city. *Seventy weeks* may also be translated seventy “*sevens.*” “*Weeks*” translated in the Hebrew language means “*sevens, specifically a week of years, i.e., seven years.*” Therefore, a seventy week exile would be expected to last for seven times seventy years — 490 years.

In **Daniel 9:25**, Gabriel tells Daniel “*that from the going forth of the command*” (from verse **23**) *to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years)*, that the city of Jerusalem and its walls shall be built again.

This part of the prophecy was realized when King Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.) gave Nehemiah the order in 444 B.C. (on the 20th year of his reign) to re-build Jerusalem and its wall (**Nehemiah 2**).

From the command to build the city and the wall in Jerusalem in 444 B.C. to the crucifixion and ascension of our Messiah in 33 A.D, it totaled 477 years. But these are years of 365 days per year, and Scripture uses 360 days per year (**Genesis 8:3, 4; Daniel 7:25**). To convert, the number of days must first be figured.

In calculating the number of days, we take $444 + 33 = 477$ years. Thus, 477×365.25 [.25 added for leap years] = 174,224.25 days. Then, we divide 174,224.25 by 360, which totals 483.94 years.

And by subtracting the beginning and ending dates of the years between 444 B.C. and 33 A.D., the figure of exactly 483 years would result.

Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension followed, which set aside God's dealings with the nation of Israel, bringing in the creation of the Church. God stopped Israel's time clock until the future Tribulation. The future Tribulation, lasting seven years (one *week*), will complete the 490 years (seventy *weeks*) of God's dealings with Israel and will bring the present age to a close.

If Israel would have believed in their Messiah, the Millennial Kingdom would have been fulfilled at that time. However, Israel did not believe, but rejected and crucified their Messiah (**1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15**). Because of this, God's dealings with Israel were set aside in early 63 A.D., and the people (Gentiles) destroyed their city and the temple in 70 A.D. Since then, the Jewish people remain scattered amongst the Gentile nations and although many have returned to the land, this will change during the future Tribulation, as Scripture so testifies.

The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The "prince who is to come" in this verse is a reference to the future Antichrist. **Daniel 9:26** states "the end of it shall be with a flood," in which the word "flood" is best translated "outrageous, overwhelming or overflowing judgment" and refers to the destruction of the city and the temple that will take place during the last half of the future Tribulation, resulting in the dispersal of the Jewish people.

It is interesting to note that in early 63 A.D. the offer of the *heavenly* kingdom was strictly being offered to the Church (**Acts 28:28**) and no longer to Israel. "Seven" years later, in 70 A.D., God's judgment came upon the nation of Israel with the destruction of Jerusalem. These two accounts reveal the order in which the Lord will deal with Israel and the Church at the end of this age. The Church will be removed first, and then God will resume His dealings with Israel for seven years, bringing about their repentance through tribulation as well as their restoration. In calculating a 2000 year dispensation from the year 63 A.D. (using 360 days per year), one can determine the close proximity of the end of this age.

The Antichrist will arise opening the seven year Tribulation (verse 27), and once again Israel's time clock will begin. At this time the Church will have been removed to heaven and will no longer be in view. The Antichrist will make a covenant of peace with Israel for seven years (one *week*), allowing them to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. But after three and one half years, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel, take away the daily sacrifices, and will place “*the abomination of desolation*” (verse 27; **Matthew 24:15**) in the new holy temple where a statue of the beast will be erected in the temple for worship until the consummation of the age. Christ's return will bring about this consummation.

Several current trends provide insight on just how close we are to the end times. No one can dispute the fact that the Church has essentially abandoned biblical prophecy altogether, leaving the message of Christ's second return, the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Messianic Era unspoken. Today, the Church as a whole has completely fallen away from “the faith,” i.e., the Word of the kingdom.

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (1Timothy 4:1-3)

The world today, composed of an ungodly society, is more closely aligned with the enemy of our soul. An eye opener is the economic and moral downfall of world-wide societies. Corruption and deception in global financial markets and governments have become prominent. Greed and all sorts of wickedness have escalated beyond measure.

The end times' name used in the Book of **Revelation** to describe our world today is "Babylon." Although this will involve a literal place in the future during the Tribulation, this name is also used as the symbol of a godless global system, which will reach the pinnacle of God's wrath.

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud,

blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.

(2 Timothy 3:1-5)

There is a pattern of lawlessness dominating our society today that throughout history was found in civilizations in the process of decline. It is a pattern evident in nations that rejected God's word as the ultimate authority in their lives and is a pattern prevailing in many people today. The result of idolatry in our society has been immorality on a scale unparalleled in the history of man. This worldwide work of lawlessness, instigated by Satan, has been for the purpose of paving the way for the acceptance of the lawless one.

And God's chosen people, Israel, have been the center of attention in the world. The enemies of the Jewish people are clearly seen in the news through the spectrum of Biblical prophecy. But the evil ambitions of the nations who rage against God, His city, and the Jewish people will one day be brought down. By comparing Biblical prophecy with current trends, it is evident that we are very near the end of this age. The Middle East problem today, with Israel in the midst of the Moslem nations (a place they are not supposed to be until Christ Himself returns them to their land) exists because of Israel's disobedience (**Isaiah 1:2ff**, described as "sick, wounded"). Satan uses the surrounding Gentile nations, which are under his control, in his effort to destroy Israel.

This is why there is an escalating problem in the Middle East today, one in which the surrounding nations rage against Israel seeking to destroy her. This Middle East problem, along with the present worldwide economic and civil turmoil, will end with Christ's return.

As Christians, our viewpoint should be quite different than that of the world. As we see these events unfolding and matters getting worse, we are to be joyful in a sense because of that which is to follow — the return of our Lord Jesus Christ and the removal of the Church. Our hearts should be saddened by the ungodliness of this dark world, yet we are to be excitingly joyful that God has a much better place prepared for those who love Him. And those who want to live godly lives in the midst of an evil

world must be prepared for persecution and suffering. God does not promise us deliverance from persecution and suffering, but deliverance through it. He allows trials in order to develop our capacity to reign with Him in His kingdom. Through God, we can overcome adversity in our lives. We have much to look forward to, *if* we prepare ourselves and patiently endure.

DANIEL'S 70 WEEK PROPHECY

Daniel 9:24-27

Daniel's Vision
539 B.C.

69 Weeks (483 Years) Daniel 9:25

7 Weeks
(49 Years)
360 Year
Calendar
444 BC-395BC
Decree of
Artaxerxes
to rebuild
Jerusalem
(Nehemiah 2)

62 Weeks
(434 Years)
360 Year
Calendar
395 BC-33 AD
Rebuilding of
Jerusalem
completed
(Nehemiah
6:15) until
Messiah



"After 62 Weeks, Messiah will be cut off" (Daniel 9:26)

1st Temple
537 BC-
515 BC

2nd Temple
19 BC-
64 AD

Church
Period-
Israel set
aside in
63 AD

Third
Dispensation
of 2,000
Years

Destruction
of Jerusalem
in 70 AD

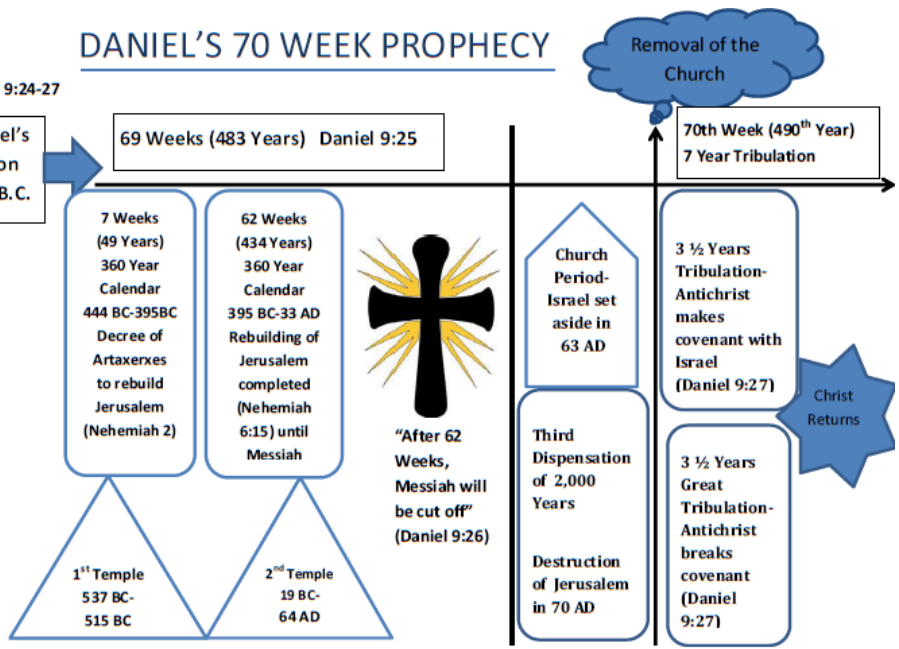
3 ½ Years
Tribulation-
Antichrist
makes
covenant with
Israel
(Daniel 9:27)

3 ½ Years
Great
Tribulation-
Antichrist
breaks
covenant
(Daniel
9:27)



Removal of the Church

70th Week (490th Year)
7 Year Tribulation



OUTLINE OF GOD'S PLANS

1. The original creation (**Genesis 1:1**)
2. Satan's rebellion along with a third of the angels (**Genesis 1:2a**)
3. The earth restored (**Genesis 1:2b-2:25**)
4. Creation of man in the image and likeness of God (**Genesis 1:26-28**)
5. Satan's entrance into the Garden of Eden and the fall of man (**Genesis 3**)
6. God's covenant with Abraham and the nation of Israel (**Genesis 11:31**)
7. The first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ (**Gospels: Matthew 1:16; John 1:14**)
8. The kingdom of heaven rejected by Israel, Jesus Christ crucified, resurrected and ascended;
[*Christ the firstfruits*] (**Matthew 23:13; 27:35, 51-53; 28:1; Acts 1:9; 1 Corinthians 15:23**)
9. The new creation in Christ, the Church formed (**Gospels: Matthew 16:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24**)
10. Removal of the Church to heaven; Day of the Lord in heaven (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 1:7-10**)
11. Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven -- judgment of the Church (**2 Corinthians 5:10; Rev 1-4**)
12. Seven year Tribulation on earth; Opening of the seven seals; the redemption of the inheritance (**Daniel 9:27; Revelation 6-18**)
13. Ministry of the two witnesses during first half of the Tribulation (**Revelation 11:1-6**)
14. The Antichrist revealed (**Daniel 7:8; Revelation 6:2-8**)
15. Antichrist makes covenant with Israel; Israel rebuilds Holy Temple in Jerusalem (**Daniel 9:27, Amos 9:11, Acts 15:16**)
16. Satan and his angels expelled from heaven and cast to the earth (**Revelation 12:7**)
17. Great Tribulation begins; middle of the week (middle of 7 years); Antichrist breaks covenant with Israel; Antichrist sets up an image of the beast in the Holy Temple, known as the "*abomination of desolation*" (**Daniel 8:13, 14; 9:27; Revelation 13:15**)
18. 144,000 Jews are sealed and preach the gospel of the kingdom to all the world (**Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:1, 8**)
19. Seven trumpet judgments of God (**Revelation 8:7-9:21; 11:15-19**)
20. Reaping the earth's Harvest: Judgment on the nations; fall of world powers and economies (**Joel 3:1-16; Revelation 14:14-16**)
21. Reaping the Grapes of Wrath, which introduces the Battle of Armageddon (**Revelation 14:17-20**); Seven bowl judgments completing the wrath of God (**Revelation Chapter 16**)
22. Antichrist, False Prophet, and the nations gather their armies together to prepare for the battle of Armageddon against Israel (**Revelation 16:14, 16**)
23. Final fall of Babylon – Fall of Gentile world power (**Revelation 18:1-24**)
24. The marriage festivities of the Lamb and His bride in heaven (**Revelation 19:6**)
25. The second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; Day of the Lord on earth (**Revelation 19:11**)
26. The entire nation of Israel gathered from the four corners of the earth and judged in the wilderness (**Ezekiel 20:34, 35**); and restored to their land (**Isaiah 61, 62; Ezekiel 39:25-29**)
27. The battle of Armageddon; Christ defeats Antichrist, False Prophet and their armies; Antichrist and False Prophet cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 19:17-21**)
28. Christ defeats Satan and bounds him for 1000 years (**Revelation 20:1-3**)
29. The Messianic Era begins; a dual kingdom established: on earth (God's wife, Israel) and in heaven (bride of Christ); both rule and reign with Christ for 1000 years (**Revelation 20:4**)
30. After 1000 years, Satan released by God and deceives the nations once again (**Revelation 20:7, 8**); then, the Great battle (Gog and Magog – Gentile nations of the entire earth) against Israel; Satan cast into the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:8b-10**)
31. The Great White Throne Judgment for the unsaved (**Revelation 20:11-15**)
32. The earth and heaven destroyed and all things made new: The New Jerusalem; The Eternal Ages begin and have no end (**Revelation 21-22:5**)