

## **What will happen after the Rapture (Part 1)**

The purpose of the tribulation period is twofold. One, to bring about the conversion of the nation Israel to prepare them for her Messiah. Two, to pour out God's judgment on the unbelieving nations of the world.

The tribulation period, seven years in length, is really broken up into two 3 ½ year time periods. Many believe that the real suffering will take place in the latter 3 ½ years, with the first 3 ½ years pretty much like it is now. There are also many Bible scholars that believe that most of the events of the tribulation period are of a symbolic nature and are not to be taken literally. I do not share these philosophies as you will discover as we walk through the tribulation period. While there is some symbolism, the majority of the events are described in plain language and are to be taken literally. Those that are not explained by its context, are explained in other parts of the Bible in plain English. For example, the Lord told many parables that the religious leaders of that day could not understand, but later, He explain them clearly to His apostles. This is just one example of how the Lord explained prophecies about future events.

When Jesus comes to take His bride, many millions of people will suddenly disappear. How will this go unnoticed? What will be the explanation for this sudden disaster? Let's face it, mothers will lose their babies, brothers will lose their sisters, husbands will lose their wives, and so on. This will be big news worldwide. I'm sure that UFOs or some paranormal hypothesis will be a prevailing theory.

After the rapture occurs the restrainer will be removed, but not taken from the earth. I believe this restrainer to be the Holy Spirit. When the church is taken from the earth the Holy Spirit will stop holding back the door and allow satan to proceed with his plan. This will usher in the beginning of the Great Day Of The Lord. This is also when the man of sin will be revealed, better known as the antichrist. Without the removing of the restrainer the antichrist could not come on the scene.

At this time John is viewing, as a spectator, the events unfolding in heaven. Revelation 5:1-5 details what happened next:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because

no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Only Jesus was found to be able to open the seven sealed book, for He alone is worthy. What is in the book? The judgments of God. The first set of judgments will be the Seven Sealed Judgments, followed by the Seven Trumpet Judgments, and lastly, the Seven Bowl Judgments.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1, 2)

**The breaking of the first seal reveals a white horse and rider.** The rider is the antichrist and he will come on the scene at the very beginning of the tribulation period as a man of peace. When war seems to be on the verge of breaking out, he will sway the nations with his charisma, savvy and political charm. His only mission will be to fix the world of its problems and set himself up as the god of this world. In order to accomplish this he will go forth conquering and taking some nations by force. No one will be able to stand in his way and all who oppose him will be crushed. He will kill many in the name of peace that his kingdom may be established. Of course, he will fail miserably. For peace will only be established when Jesus sets up His earthly kingdom.

The first thing that will take place will be a formation of the Revived Roman Empire. He will begin by controlling a ten-nation block, in which three nations he will take by force. Grant Jeffrey, author of *Armageddon Appointment With Destiny* sees it as somewhat of a military takeover.

“That after these ten nations have formed a ten-nation “Roman confederacy”, then the “little horn,” the new leader of Western Europe (the Antichrist), will seize three of the nations by force. Then the other seven nations apparently will submit and join him.”

This league of nations will be formed and in place before the signing of the seven-year peace agreement with Israel. This alliance will be very successful both economically and politically. Many believe the European Union will be this powerful bloc of nations.

Although the Antichrist will be a powerful ruler, he will still have to answer to another potent end time nation known as Mystery Babylon. I believe this nation to be modern day America. Later on in the tribulation period the Antichrist will challenge their power. This will be discussed in length in later chapters.

Meanwhile, the Antichrist will revive this empire to its former glory and eventually wage war against the Lord at the end of the tribulation period.

And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. (Revelation 6:3, 4)

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**When the second seal is opened it reveals a red horse and rider.** This illustrates that peace will be removed from the earth and open conflict will break out everywhere. Of course, we have seen war throughout history, and even today, it is a constant threat worldwide. But in that day, this will be a war that will be unparalleled to anything that has happened in the past. God will allow this to take place as part of His judgment upon the earth.

One of the things that many take for granted or don't understand, it is by the grace of God that this type of nuclear catastrophe has not taken place already. If we were given a glimpse of what has gone on in the various war rooms around the world it would shock us. God has placed His sovereign hand of protection on the world, but shortly, it will be removed.

Although the antichrist will come in peace, his plans will see resistance and worldwide war will break out. It isn't known which nations will take part in this war, but they will be no match and will be soundly defeated.

This victory by the antichrist will cause the nations to fear and tremble. Many will be mesmerized by his accomplishments and the speed of his ascension. But the damage from the war will be staggering and many of the effects will be irreversible. Life will definitely be changed forever from that day forward.

Following the war, the antichrist will set up his headquarters in Rome. This will become both the political and religious capital of the world. It is my belief that the world religions will unite under one religious order and exercise great political influence for the first three and a half years. But at the beginning of the second half, the false prophet will rise up out of this false religious order and betray her.

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Although God has raptured His church, **He will raise various witnesses up to proclaim the truth.** There will be three specific witnesses that we will note; one, the heavenly angels; two, the 144,000 Jewish witnesses; and three, the two witnesses that will preach openly.

**The two witnesses will come on the scene at the beginning of the tribulation period.** They will not be born into the world but will be sent from God. Yes, God could bring them into the world through birth (He alone has this power), but I don't believe He will. These will be men sent from heaven, who will have heavenly bodies equipped especially for the task at hand. God will supply them with supernatural powers and they will not be able to be killed until their mission is complete. When the antichrist does kill them, God will have allowed it. I'm sure Satan will think he has won, but he's only walking deeper into the trap.

There has been much speculation regarding the two witnesses and their identities. I believe they will be Moses and Elijah, because they appeared with Jesus at the transfiguration. But whoever they are, they will be a devastating combination.

Their message will be one of repentance, judgment and preparation for the coming King. They will be dressed in sackcloth and their ministry will last the first three and a half years of the tribulation period. Although many will try, no one will be able to harm them. They will be given special powers to kill their enemies with fire or whatever means their enemies attempt to kill them. They will have the power to stop the rain from falling for the full three and a half years. They will have the power to turn water to blood, to call fire down from heaven and to bring massive plagues on the earth. Anyone who attempts to stop them from fulfilling their earthly ministry will be literally destroyed. No man or army will be able to stop or hinder their mission, not even the antichrist.

Yes, both the antichrist and the Lord's two witnesses will be on the scene at the same time, but he will be powerless against them. But at the conclusion of the three and a half years they will be killed by him.

**The second group of witnesses, the 144,000 Jews,** will be sealed for the work of God. They will be set aside to preach the message of salvation to the entire world and will have the seal of God on their foreheads as protection. Many will be saved during their ministry as stated in Revelation 7:9-17. I believe their mission will last throughout the seven years of the tribulation and will carry right on into the millennium.

**The third group of witnesses are angels.** During the course of the tribulation period, angels will visibly appear in the sky preaching to the inhabitants of the earth. Their message will be of repentance and warning not to take the mark of the beast. This will be elaborated on more fully later on

that will be unparalleled to anything that has happened in the past. God will allow this to take place as part of His judgment upon the earth.

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And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. (Revelation 6:5, 6)

**After the third seal is opened a black horse and rider with balances will appear.** This indicates that a great famine worldwide will occur on the earth. The affects of no rain and plagues by the two witnesses will only magnify the situation. The devastation of war will produce disease and hunger. Only one tenth of the normal food supply will be available. Many will suffer starvation. Others will steal to survive. It would not surprise me if strict rationing legislation were passed internationally, and the death penalty imposed for anyone caught stealing. These will be desperate times and certainly a time of lawlessness.

The warning “see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” is also mentioned. This indicates that even though the poor will be at starvation levels, the famine won’t have the same effect on those who are wealthy.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." (Revelation 6:7, 8)

**The fourth seal is broken and reveals an ashen horse and rider coming on the scene.** Whether this will occur in the first or second half of the tribulation period is still a big question. If there is a break from the chronological format

this would be it. There could also be a larger gap of time between the third and fourth rider, bringing it closer to the midpoint of the tribulation period. Either way it's going to happen, and a lot of people are going to die. This horseman is appropriately given the name Death. Through this rider one-fourth of the world's population will be killed. Taking into consideration that today's world population is around 5 billion, it can be assumed 1.25 billion people will die. Although the antichrist will come in peace, his agenda will be met through much bloodshed. When his peace plan does fail, the offenders will be exterminated. But the world will view his brutal military action as a necessary evil to attain the ultimate goal-world peace. Hunger will also claim a great many lives. But the most frightening death of all will not be human. In that day, literally millions of people will be killed by wild beast. God will take away the fear of man from animals. What used to be prey will now become predator.

Just imagine yourself coming home from work. As you drive up to your house, the family pet comes running out to greet you, so you think. Little do you know, he's already killed everyone in the house. As you reach down to pet him, he leaps and knocks you to the ground. Something has gone terribly wrong. Other vicious pets in the neighborhood join in on the kill. You struggle, but to no avail. One has you by the throat while the others are tearing you apart. The only thing left to do is die.

Yes, this will be a terrible time to live. Many would say that this is pertaining to wild animals and I partly agree. Wild animals will claim their share of kills also. But pets are wild animals too, they've only been domesticated. If your left behind don't turn your back.

I will estimate that we are now about two and a half to three and a half years into the tribulation period. At this time the Israeli nation is under the protection of the antichrist, through the guidelines of his peace plan. Although the antichrist will probably be the supreme head of the United Nations (and the Revived Roman Empire), not all nations will bend their knee to his authority. In fact, some will even challenge it. One of these countries will be Russia.

As discussed previously, it is predicted in Ezekiel 38 & 39 that Russia and its coalition will attack Israel. Many of these nations are enemies of Israel today. Listed are Iran, Ethiopia, Libya, Egypt, and possibly Turkey. It wouldn't surprise me if Iraq were in the middle of this also. It isn't completely clear when this attack will occur. I stated earlier, it is possible that it could take place before the tribulation period begins, but I believe it is more likely to happen toward the middle years of the tribulation.

The attack will be based on greed, control of the Middle East, and as mentioned earlier, to challenge the authority of the antichrist. This will be seen as an all out rebellion toward the peace process. This bloc of nations already have controlling interest in the Middle East, all they lack is Israel.

Russia and its allies will launch a twofold attack, by land and by air from the north. Egypt will come in from the south with its military arsenal. It is believed that this attack will be a complete surprise to Israel and will catch them totally unaware. But as the northern armies reach the mountains of Israel something supernatural will occur. As described in Ezekiel 38-39, God will completely destroy the Arab and Russian forces. His method of destruction...He will rain fire and brimstone down from heaven. This will destroy every jetfighter in the air. At the same time, God will cause a great earthquake to occur that will be felt all over the world. This will destroy and dismantle all armored vehicles and cause major casualties on the ground. For those who survive the earthquake, He will then cause mass confusion amongst the armies and they will begin to kill each other. The Book of Ezekiel further states that those that are not killed in the previous three ways will be killed by plagues, wild animals, and plain old fear. Simply put, they'll be scared to death. Russia and its allies will die in the mountains of Israel in the worst military defeat in history. It will take seven months to bury the dead.

It should be pointed out that the antichrist may or may not be involved in heading off the Russian attack on Israel. The Book of Ezekiel does make it plain that God will use spectacular means to destroy this formidable army and Israel will not lift a finger. After this awesome display of power, the world will be in shock, and strangely enough, will attribute this stunning defeat to the hand of God.

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: Every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify



myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 38:18-24)

There are a number of reasons for this attack both spiritual and material. But Russia really has little use for holy wars, unlike its allies. Russia is in it for one reason and one reason only--the money.

You may wonder what gain a tiny country such as Israel could possibly provide for such a monstrous country like Russia? Very little until recently! Since 1947, about 410 oil wells have been dug with little result. I think the highest yield from one of the wells was around 800 barrels a day. Not a success story by any means. They tried offshore drilling and drilled around the Dead Sea, but still encountered poor results. Recent wells drilled in 1994, 1995 include Givot Olam's Meged-2 well which recovered oil from the Mohilla Fm in L-244 and the David-1 well to the southwest of Rosh Ha' Ayin, reached T.D. at 6,000m. The well had a strong gas show at the Base Permian Saad Fm but was not tested due to mechanical problems.

Test after test, drilling after drilling continued with little to no success. But in August of 1997 oil was discovered and it was a major mother load. You probably seen it on the news and didn't pay much attention to it because oil is discovered in the Middle East all the time. But this is no ordinary oil discovery. Let me put it in perspective. After hearing this news I decided to look on the internet to see if there were any stories out there that could provide a little more insight into this discovery. Sure enough there was! In fact, it was from the company that discovered it. It was an ad trying to find venture capitalist that might be interested in investing in this project. Here is the ad as I read it.

"Givot Olam is looking for Joint Venture Partners. Based on a comprehensive geological review, we have developed a new understanding of the petroleum geology of Israel. This not only explains why many previous oil exploration efforts in Israel have failed, but also predicts where oil can be found.

We have drilled an initial well in our License area onshore Central Israel which has discovered good quality 40° API oil and confirmed our key geological predictions. We are now planning to drill a second well to test the geological structure further which is estimated to contain 1 BILLION BARRELS OF OIL AND 4 TCF\* OF GAS." (<http://www.givot.co.il>)

This story was confirmed by CNN Interactive on their website. This is only the tip of the iceberg. I will predict that you will see a lot more of these natural resources discovered in the very near future coming out of the land of Israel.

It seems very strange that for 50 years, the best engineers that money could buy were unable to find an oil reserve of this magnitude. But I believe that God has baffled the scientists these many years to preserve Israel's untold riches (not only oil) for the last days. It will be for this reason that Russia will attack the Holy Land, to take of the abundant bounty that presumably will be an easy prey (Ezekiel 38:8-13).

We are now about three to three and a half years into the tribulation period. Up to this point the antichrist has brought peace to the Middle East and has put down several foes that would oppose his peace plan. Many have died to accomplish his goals, but considering the world turmoil, death and disasters, things seem to be getting better. The world is now looking to him to solve the hunger problem. After all, he is the head of a very prosperous league of nations, and for a short time, I believe that he will bring things under control. But it will only be for the purpose of meeting his ultimate goal of human deification.

Satan in his limited vision actually believes that he will one day compel all men to worship him and eventually succeed in overthrowing God. But little does Satan know, God is actually using him to perform His perfect will, and in His time, bring down His wrath upon those who would worship him. Satan is and always has been nothing more than a mere tool of God's to work and mold man into being more like Christ and bring glory to Himself. I think Norman Grubb in his book *Yes, I Am*, describes this point best. He writes:

Satan himself was God's created being, of the highest order. In his freedom he rebelled, and founded the kingdom of darkness of which he is god. But he is still forever *God's* Satan, and God deliberately used Satan, for instance, to bring Job to the final end of himself (as he uses him in all our lives!). And that is one of the great recorded evidences in the Bible that God is manipulating Satan, not Satan God (Job 1:8 and 2:3). Stretch this out, and (without excusing Satan for his evil designs) we find in all human history we can boldly call Satan "God's convenient agent." We have already sought to make plain that if Satan had not first been free to take us the wrong way, we would never now be safely settled in the right way through Christ. Watch carefully, and see God continually using evil for good purposes: "meaning" the evil as the product of our freedom, but using it for His overcoming grace.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they

should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9-11)

**The fifth seal is now opened and the scene shifts to heaven.** A host of martyrs are seen in heaven before God. They have been dressed in white signifying their total redemption. Who are these people? They are individuals who have heard the Word and have accepted it. They have been slain for the Word of God that lives in them and their testimony. As in the days of the early church, severe persecution of God's witnesses will be the rule. Many will die for their faith. In that day there won't be any backsliders, nor will there be any Christians dabbling in and out of the world. All will be true followers of Christ.

Even after all the destruction, devastation, death and famine, those of the earth will not repent. Instead they will slaughter those who have decided to follow the Lord. Immediately, upon death, they will be ushered up to heaven. Standing before the throne they are puzzled why God does not instantly destroy the murderers. They are asked to be patient until certain others have been martyred. But He promises that their day of vengeance will come.

Another point that comes to mind is, although religion will flourish during the tribulation period, it will be a Christ-less religious system. I think it is safe to say, at this point in the tribulation period, all indications suggest that all who name the name Jesus will be considered an enemy to those on the earth.

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." (Revelation 11:7-13)

At the end of the first 3 ½ year period, God will allow the antichrist to kill the two witnesses. Their deaths can only come when their mission is over. Whether the antichrist himself will murder them or what method will be used is unknown. This will bring the antichrist world support and fame. Those on the earth will be so happy, worldwide celebrations will take place. Holiday's will be declared. As a show of disrespect, the bodies of the witnesses will be on worldwide display in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 1/2 days. They won't even get a decent burial.

At the end of the 3 1/2 days, just as the party is warming up, God will cause the two witnesses to come back to life. This will stop the party cold. As the world looks on, a voice will call down from heaven and life will enter them. They will then stand to their feet and ascend up into heaven. This will strike terror into every corner of the world. Those who had terrorized the world, who were dead, are alive again.

Before a red alert can be declared, Jerusalem is struck with a violent earthquake. The devastation levels a tenth of the city and claims 7,000 lives. Although, many will see this as a supernatural occurrence, they will not repent.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:7-9)

At the beginning of the last half of the tribulation period, Satan will gather his demonic army and declare war against the power of God Almighty. Why he has chosen this specific time is not known. But God, who knows the mind of Satan better than himself, is fully aware of his scheming plans. Michael the archangel will be appointed to lead the heavenly host into battle, while Satan will take command and lead his forces.

I could give you some futuristic tale of war and bravery, and how the heavenly forces came so close to being defeated, but the truth of the matter is Satan and his armies never had a chance and are soundly defeated.

As a result, Satan and his demons are then cast out of heaven and onto the earth. At this point, he will know that his time is very short and will be out to destroy everything in his path. The earth will be his new battleground and the

main target will be the nation of Israel. This will begin the most horrible portion of the tribulation period better known as the “Great Day Of The Lord”.

And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:13-17)

Some believe that when Satan is cast out of heaven, in his hatred for Israel, he will personally attack the 144,000 witnesses and those they have lead to the Lord. But God will protect them and make a way for them to escape. “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Apparently, God will evacuate the remnant to a place of safety. Many believe that this wilderness safe haven will be the ancient city of Petra in southern Palestine. There they will hide out for the remaining three and a half years until the Lord comes back.

At this time it is important to bring in another character, the false prophet. It is not completely clear when the false prophet comes on the scene. He could have been there from the beginning, but stayed behind the scenes until his hour had come.

It’s not apparent what position he will hold, but his mission is clear. I believe he will head up the religious side of Babylon and the world church. I am quite sure that he is alive and well today in one of the church systems. He will work his way up through the future world church and one day ascend to its highest position, but in the end, he will betray them. His power will be astonishing and his bond with the antichrist will be unshakeable. From Dwight Pentecost’s book *Things To Come* is a description of the false prophet and his purpose:

In close association with the Beast, the head of the federated empire, is another individual known as the “False Prophet” (Rev. 19:20; 20: 10), called “the second beast” in Revelation 13:11-17, where his fullest description is given. In that passage of Scripture there are some important factors concerning him to be

observed: (1) This individual is evidently a Jew, since he arises out of the earth, or land, that is Palestine (13: 11); (2) he is influential in religious affairs (13: 11, “two horns like a lamb”); (3) he is motivated by Satan as the first beast is (13:11); (4) he has a delegated authority (13:12, “the power of the first beast”); (5) he promotes the worship of the first beast and compels the earth to worship the first beast as God (13:12); (6) his ministry is authenticated by the signs and miracles which he does, evidently proving that he is Elijah that was to come (13:13-14); (7) he is successful in deceiving the unbelieving world (13:14); (8) the worship promoted is an idolatrous worship (13:14-15); (9) he has the power of death to compel men to worship the beast (13:15); (10) he has authority in the economic realm to control all commerce (13:16-17); (11) he has a mark that will establish his identity for those who live in that day (13:18).

Although the false prophet will eventually be as powerful as the antichrist, his only goal will be to promote the worship of the beast. In further discussion about the false prophet, Charles C. Ryrie goes on to say in his book *Revelation* that, “In order to accomplish his aim, this second beast (false prophet) will be empowered to do certain things...He will make fire come down on the earth in imitation of the power of the two witnesses, to show the world that he has as much power as they had.”

In doing these miracles, he will deceive the world into worshipping the antichrist as God. God will allow this display of wizardry to ultimately sift out those who will serve Him from those who will serve the antichrist.

Of course, as Christians, we are all acquainted with the Holy Trinity-The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. As good is the opposite of evil, there is a Holy Trinity and an unholy trinity.

When Satan is cast out of heaven, he will indwell and take full control of the antichrist. As God and Christ are one (John 10:30), so will Satan and the antichrist. The antichrist will only desire to do the will of Satan the father of all lies.

The false prophet will complete the unholy trinity. Like the Holy Spirit, who compels men to Christ, he will compel those of the earth to follow and worship the beast. His only mission will be to coerce men into following the antichrist or face death. In this sense, Satan will mimic the Holy Trinity with his own unholy version.

As stated earlier, toward the midpoint of the tribulation period, Satan and his army of demons will be defeated by God and His heavenly host, and cast out of

heaven. From that day forward, he will be permanently banned from heaven and confined to earth. His first move will be to indwell the antichrist and eventually control the world through him.

After the defeat of the Russian coalition, the antichrist and the false prophet, at some point, will move their world headquarters from Rome to Jerusalem. After their great victory and salvation of Israel, I'm sure they will receive them with great celebration and honor. It is at this point that the antichrist will make his bid for total world dominance. But first, he must free himself from those who would rule over him (Rev. 17:1-18).

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. (Revelation 14:8)

Much speculation has been raised over "Mystery Babylon". Is it a country, empire or system of some sort? Is it symbolic or literal? Is Babylon religious, commercial or political? What does the Bible have to say about this mysterious Babylon?

During the tribulation period there will be a nation that will rule over the antichrist and his ten-nation kingdom (Rev. 17:1-18). They will dictate what the antichrist can and cannot do for the first part of the tribulation period. They will be a formidable dynasty of the time. Not only will this country have great worldwide political power, it will also be very wealthy and religious in nature. Notice in the description that Babylon is pictured as a harlot riding a beast (antichrist). The beast has ten horns (Revived Roman Empire) representing ten nations, which are subject to the beast. In essence, Babylon has given the beast and the ten nations their power, but remains very much in control. As stated earlier, this will change toward the middle of the tribulation period.

Although many Bible scholars denounce this conclusion, I am convinced that Babylon is the United States. Many believe that in the years to come the economic tide will turn toward the European Union and lead to the decline of America. For years I have heard the cries of world economists predicting the coming stock market crash, the collapse of the dollar (all fueled by an out-of-control deficient), and the impending doom of the American economic structure, as we know it. Well, you can rest easy; it's not going to happen! In fact, I believe America will continue to be economically strong up until the end.

When the rapture occurs, the Christian influence will be taken out of America, and hedonism and materialism will shift into high gear. Revelation 18:13 proclaims that they will sell or do anything for profit, "... And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." It's unclear what the last phrase "souls of men" means, but it wouldn't surprise me if some form of slavery exists.

Babylon is described more fully in Revelation 18 and bears a striking resemblance to the United States. This chapter not only describes the demise of a country, but the magnitude of its greatness. Speaking about the magnitude of its greatness, it states that after Babylon was destroyed, from a distance, the kings of the earth and merchants of the sea wept and moaned over her desolation, "And saying, alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, what city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate." (Revelation 18:16-19)

This is talking about a country that is considered the greatest commercial profit center of its time. No other nation can even be compared to its great wealth. All the nations of the world have become rich due to their trade with this country. The merchants of this nation were known as the great men of the world. When it is destroyed world trade will be devastated. This will be a great worldwide loss both financially and politically.

Not only will Babylon be destroyed, its destruction will be swift and decisive, leading me to believe that this will be an all out nuclear attack. It is my opinion that there will be few if any survivors. This is how the Bible describes its demise.

And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of



the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (Revelation 18:21-24)

The destruction of this country will be so severe that it will be uninhabitable. Not even the light of one lamp will be found in this place. For in one day it will be reduced to rubble.

The reason for this total destruction is found in the above latter verses. “For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” You might say, “The United States has only been around for a little over two hundred years, why would God say that they have slain and shed the blood of the prophets?” I’m not sure but it is my guess that He is referring to the roots of Mystery Babylon, which can be traced back to the original ancient site located in Iraq. For it is from this evil empire that Mystery Babylon will get its beginnings. The religious side of Babylon, which we will discuss next, is also guilty of killing the prophets and the saints. Its roots go back to the time of the early church.

There is also a religious side to Mystery Babylon. Some believe, after the rapture occurs, that many of the religions of the world will band together and form a one-world religion to worship God in any way you may like. It will not be a Christ centered religion but a one God under many different names religion...a type of freedom religion. After all, God is everywhere and goes by many names in different parts of the world. This will be their rationale.

The United Religions will probably place its headquarters at the Vatican and the Pope (false prophet) will be appointed to lead it. Although Rome will probably be the world headquarters, the United States will be its powerful ally. Charles C. Ryrie describes religious Babylon as follows:

Babylon will likely build on the remnants of the professing Christian church that existed before the Rapture. Professing Christians who will not be raptured will remain to form the base of this “church”. Tribulation saints, of course, will oppose this false church. The harlotry of this system will extend to “many waters,” which means to many people and will include alliances with leaders of the earth. In other words, the power of this church will be enhanced by political alliances.

God looks at this religious system as a harlot because it has become interwoven with the world. They have a form of God, but in reality, are no more than a religious order. They saw themselves as the future Bride of Christ, but allowed themselves to be polluted with worldly lusts and the pleasures therein.

Religious Babylon is not a physical country with a standing army, but a literal system that will have worldwide influence in many powerful countries. Both the antichrist and the religious system will use each other to gain position and power. But in the end, the false prophet, as a wolf in sheep's clothing, will betray religious Babylon and promote the antichrist as God.

At this point we are about three and a half to four years into the tribulation period. This is the scenario that I see for religious and political Babylon. Future political Babylon is the United States. The United Religions (World Council of Churches) is the religious side of the empire. Both will rule together as a wealthy and politically powerful partnership. The United Religions will rule from Rome and the United States will rule the world through the United Nations as it does today. At the beginning of the tribulation period, I believe the antichrist will become the head of United Nations. He will be hand picked by the United States. For the first three and a half years the United States (Mystery Babylon) will control the antichrist and his ten-nation confederacy.

At around the middle of the tribulation period, after Satan is defeated and removed from heaven, he will enter the antichrist. This will start the beginning of the end for the U.S. and the U.R. For Satan would not be ruled over by God, and will not tolerate being ruled over by man either. God, at this time, will use the antichrist and his kingdom to exact judgment upon this wicked nation.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” (Revelation 17:16, 17)

The antichrist and his kingdom will turn on the United States, and whatever allies it may have, and launch an all out nuclear attack. The destruction from the U.S. counter attack is not mentioned, but I'm sure there will be casualties. Not only are the United States and its allies (if any) defeated, the destruction is so dreadful that the land is no longer fit for use or to live on.

The defeat is so swift and decisive it will leave the rest of the world terrified and shocked. For this was the greatest nation on the face of the earth and in one

hour they were completely destroyed. Kings, dignitaries, and businessmen are all left wondering what will happen next as they scramble to recoup losses and position themselves for what may happen with this dramatic change of power.

I have been both praised and blasted for stating that the United States will be Mystery Babylon. Of all the articles that I have written this has come under the most fire by far. Many have agreed with my choice due to the obvious characteristics. At the same time, many feel my position to be incorrect because of the location. Ancient Babylon was located in the Middle East, and many Bible scholars believe that this ancient city will once again be rebuilt, and return to its former glory in the last days.

But there is another side of this argument. Many of those who have corresponded with me simply can't believe that a great and powerful nation such as the United States could be destroyed in one day. This is just simply not possible. To take on a nation of this magnitude would immediately set off a world war. And what about the sophisticated worldwide radar and defense system that they must penetrate. Within minutes of their first launch they'd know about it through their satellite surveillance.

I believe that the antichrist will have something supernatural on his side. For the Bible declares that God Himself will use this block of nations to destroy this ungodly nation. I believe that God will allow the antichrist and his allies to in some way launch some type of stealth sneak attack (much like Pearl Harbor), which will literally destroy the U.S. with little or no recourse in one day. You have to remember this attack will be ordained by God. You also have to remember that it has been by God's hand that man has not destroyed himself in the previous six thousand years. I think many have lost sight of the fact that God deals in the realm of the supernatural and not in the realm of earthly logic.

This is the scenario that I see. Satan will enter into the antichrist giving him great power. He will at once give the order that the United States must immediately be destroyed totally and completely. Through supernatural means, the antichrist will miraculously enable his forces to penetrate the U.S. defense radar undetected. Satan does have great power and God will at this time allow him to use it. The U.S. will be hit from nuclear missile silos around the world, from nuclear submarines and air support within a matter of minutes. They literally won't know what hit them. I believe the attack will be such a surprise that there will be no retaliation, few if any survivors, and will leave the land uninhabitable. However this attack plays out, the Bible states that Mystery Babylon will be destroyed in one day and that's exactly what will happen.

