

The Return of The King

A Prophetic Timeline of End-Time Events

Sample Content

Chapter One - (select passages)

THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL

One of the most fascinating pre-tribulational prophecies concerns a most unlikely historical event. Israel is shown in Ezekiel 20 being restored as a nation, for the purpose of being judged and purged in preparation to repent and receive their Messiah, Christ. Israel will receive Christ toward the end of the tribulation but must be re-established as a nation prior to the beginning of the tribulation as will be demonstrated later. This may not seem particularly fascinating on the surface, but considering that Israel was not a nation *at all* from the first century until 1948, this is actually a *quite* impressive prophecy which has come to pass in the lifetime of the current generation.

Ezekiel 20:32-38

³² *"You say, 'We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone.' But what you have in mind will never happen. ³³ As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will rule over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. ³⁴ I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered--with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. ³⁵ I will bring you into the desert of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. ³⁶ As I judged your fathers in the desert of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD. ³⁷ I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. ³⁸ I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.*

In verse 34 God informs Israel that he will “bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered.”

This prophecy is two-fold regarding the sovereignty of the nation of Israel. First, it determines the scattering of the Israelites among the nations of the world at a future date from Ezekiel's writing. Secondly, it determines the gathering back of this people group into a nation once again. In historical retrospect it is understood that this timeline included almost 1900 years of the non-existent nation of Israel which would be brought back together and re-instituted by God's pre-determined plan.

In verse 36 God draws a simile between this event and the time he brought Israel out of Egypt and judged them in the Sinai dessert for their rebellion. At that time he purged the nation of those who rebelled against him and allowed a new generation to enter the Promised Land. Verse 38 states, “I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me,” indicating that Israel will at this future date again be purged of those who have rebelled against God. The unveiling of God's program for Israel will be outlined in this work, but begins with God's bringing Israel back from

the nations which she has been scattered for the purpose of this purging, which will be observed in chapters 3-5 of this work, concerning the great tribulation. In order for Israel to be subject to God's purging her of unbelievers, he will reinstitute her into a nation once again.

Verse 37 speaks of bringing Israel into the bond of the covenant. This refers to the national salvation of Israel, bringing them into the new covenant in Christ, after their purging as noted in Jeremiah 31:

Jeremiah 31:31-33

³¹ *"The time is coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.*

³² *It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them, "
declares the LORD.*

³³ *"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.
"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.*

Jeremiah 31 indicates the final restoration of Israel as they receive their Messiah. Yet this prophecy can only occur after Israel is once again a nation and has undergone the purging of Ezekiel 20.

This reconciliation of Israel from the nations of the earth is an important pre-tribulational event. It will furthermore be demonstrated in this work that the great tribulation will begin with the signing of a seven-year covenant between Israel and the Antichrist. For such to happen, Israel will be required to be a sovereign nation which is capable of accepting such a treaty.

Israel became a nation once again, gathered from the corners of the earth, in 1948, thus fulfilling the beginning, at least, of this prophecy.

Beyond this text, numerous prophecies will be examined over the course of this study which will demand that Israel be a sovereign nation for their fulfillment. If there is no Israel, these prophecies have no subject. It is essential to a literal interpretation of biblical prophecy that Israel must have been re-established as a nation at some point prior to the great tribulation.

Surely there was a great period in history when such prophecies would have seemed an impossibility to be literally fulfilled. Israel had truly been scattered to the corners of the earth, as the nation was decimated by AD 70, seemingly never to be heard of again. Yet, through God's providence a miraculous series of events transpired to bring Israel back into national status nearly two millennia after her demise.

Many questions must have existed to a pre-1948 prophetically inquisitive mind. How would Israelites retain a national identity 1900 years after the destruction of their nation? In America, known as a "melting pot" for its ethnic diversity, after only a few hundred years of history as a nation, many do not fully, or even partially know their ethnic heritage. Yet, the Jews always knew who they were, even after having been scattered among the nations and having countless generations integrated into other cultures. Prophecy teaches overwhelmingly that God is not finished with Israel as a nation. He therefore forged their national identity into their collective memories, while so many other conquered people groups throughout history have forgotten their roots in very few generations. For 1900 years, Jews remained Jews although thoroughly distributed and ingested into other societies world-wide.

One would also wonder how would a group of people be motivated to return to their homeland after fifty generations had passed from the demise of their national status. What is the call that would cause one to leave the only home one has known in order to resettle in an ancient homeland? Yet, Jews in great numbers desired to return to Israel when given the opportunity. For several hundred years prior to the re-establishment of a Jewish nation the descendants of Israel were migrating back to their geographical homeland. Truly nothing in history has come close to the perplexing migration of Jews back to their previous homeland.

While beyond the scope of this work, another phenomenal historic event was the very process of Israel's re-establishment as a nation. That a group of people could re-emerge on their geographical homeland and defend themselves against sovereign nations intent on their removal has defied all logic numerous times over. Israel has outfought, outlasted and outdone herself in ways that can only be understood in light of divine intervention on her behalf.

Today, Israel is a highly developed nation with exceptional world potential and one of the most educated populations on earth. As improbable as this must have seemed only one hundred years ago, it is an impeccable demonstration of the power of God's hand in history and the firm grasp his Word has in reality. He has brought it to pass exactly as prophesied. Israel is a nation again after almost two millennia, in her place and prepared to receive her lot as God will unfold the destiny he has written for her.

REBUILDING OF THE JEWISH TEMPLE

Another group of prophecies which tell an astounding story are those prophetic writings which speak of the use of the Jewish temple in the tribulation as well as the millennial kingdom of Christ. There is, of course, no temple in Jerusalem currently to give fulfillment to such prophecies. The first temple, Solomon's Temple, was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians. The second temple was destroyed by the Romans along with the dismantling of the nation in 70 AD. Since Israel has become a nation again, the temple has not been rebuilt. To some, the idea of a Jewish temple being rebuilt is as unlikely as the re-establishment of a Jewish nation.

While prophetic passages depict the temple playing a substantial role in tribulational events, it is unclear if the temple will be actually built prior to the beginning of the tribulation or shortly thereafter. Thus, the inclusion of this subject in the chapter entitled "Pre-tribulational Events" is based on some amount of speculation. While the timing of the beginning of the building of a new Temple is not certain, what is known with certainty from scripture is that the Temple *will* be

built and will be *in use* by the middle of the tribulation, as is described below by Daniel. To that end, it seems very *likely* that the construction on the temple will have at least begun by the advent of the tribulation, since the last temple took many decades to complete.

Daniel 9:27

²⁷ *He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him".*

The "he" in this text refers to Antichrist, a world ruler and the key character of Satan's planned work during the great tribulation. This assertion will be demonstrated later when Daniel 9 will be studied in more detail, but at this time it must only be gleaned that "he" will *"put an end to sacrifice and offering"* in the middle of the tribulation (the middle of the seven) and establish an abomination on a wing of the temple. Thus, a temple must be built and fully operational by the middle of the tribulation. It must obviously be built by its very reference in the text. But, it must also be fully operational, as Antichrist will *"put an end to sacrifice and offering,"* which will require the temple to actually be functioning.

Jesus referenced this text as an end time prophecy in Matthew 24:15, *"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."* This *"abomination of desolation"* references Daniel 9:27 in the same context as the earlier discussion on the Olivet Discourse, answering the questions *"what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* Thus, the abomination of desolation, which will occur in the temple, also requires that the temple must be rebuilt.

Yet another text referencing the temple in the tribulation is found in 2 Thessalonians. While speaking of the day of the return of Christ, Paul writes,

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

³ *Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

Paul speaks again of the man who will be known as "Antichrist." Citing the same *"abomination of desolation"* noted by Daniel and Jesus. Once again, an end time prophetic text speaks of an active temple during the period of the great tribulation. Thus, the non-existent temple must be built and operational by the middle of the tribulation. (This timing will be demonstrated in Chapter Three.)

While much of modern Israel seems relatively unconcerned with their religious heritage, having a temple in Israel has been a long-standing desire of some modern Jews. In existence today is an organization known as *The Temple Institute*, which states on its website the goal of being *"dedicated to every aspect of the Biblical Commandment to build the Holy Temple of G-d on*

Mount Moriah in Jerusalem."¹ While the building of a third temple faces seemingly insurmountable obstacles, so did the re-emergence of a nation lost for 1900 years.

The historical site of former temples in Jerusalem is commonly referred to as the "Temple Mount". On that mount, in roughly the exact place where the former temple stood, the Dome of The Rock now stands. The Dome of The Rock is considered one of the most holy Muslim sights. It is the oldest extant Muslim building and is considered by Muslims as the place where Mohammad ascended into Heaven.

The Temple Mount was acquired by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War, yet Israel has allowed Muslim control of it for the sake of peace with Muslims. Muslims have since forbidden Jewish prayer in that location. The use of the temple compound is a volatile issue between Jews and Muslims on an ongoing basis. It will be interesting to see how both Jews and Muslims will come to terms with God's plan for a temple to be rebuilt on that site. Both groups consider the site their most revered and holy ground. Surely a great issue must be resolved. It is unimaginable that Israel would desire to build their future temple on any other piece of real estate. Nor is it fathomable that Muslims will allow the Dome of The Rock to be destroyed without a fight.

Some have suggested that the treaty between Antichrist and Israel, which will be discussed later in this work, may include the solution to this issue by Antichrist somehow negotiating the building of the temple on that site in exchange for Israel's commitment to a peace treaty with him. That suggestion is extra-biblical and purely speculative, however. Moreover, it will be determined from scripture later in this work that Israel's safety will be the primary reason for her covenant with Antichrist, rather than a peaceful resolution to the Temple Mount issue. God will reveal his plan in due time concerning how the rebuilding of the temple will come to fruition. But, in whatever way it is to happen, a temple must be constructed prior to the middle of the tribulation. And, scriptural descriptions concerning the location of the Millennial Temple, which will be examined later, strongly indicate that it will be built at that very location.

THE GOG-MAGOG WAR

Another event understood to be pre-tribulational involves a battle against Israel. Ezekiel prophesies this attack which must be understood to refer to modern Israel, as the conditions of this event are such that it cannot refer to a former time in history. This attack is another event which has not yet happened as of the writing of this work. This prophecy is outlined in Ezekiel 38 with substantial detail. Commonly referred to as a war, it could perhaps be more accurately thought of as a battle, as it will be brief and not widespread, though it will certainly be notable.

Amusingly, prophecies concerning the Gog-Magog War have led many students of eschatology to continually postulate any and all attacks against Israel as somehow connected to this particular forecast. When a rogue terrorist group launches an isolated attack across Israeli borders, people immediately begin speculating the advent of the Gog-Magog war. However, the events prophesied by Ezekiel concerning this conflict make it abundantly clear that this particular event will be easily discernable to students of eschatology. It will not be something that will slip

¹ <http://www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm>

through the news cycle at media outlets without a great deal of attention. It will be large-scale, calculated and will end in such a miraculous way that the world will be forced to ponder in great awe what exactly had happened when it is over.

Ezekiel describes this attack in a nearly perfect who, what, when, where, how and why fashion.

Who are the attackers?

Ezekiel 38:1-6

¹ The word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; prophesy against him ³ and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ⁴ I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army--your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords. ⁵ Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, ⁶ also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops--the many nations with you.

Magog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal are ancient tribes that occupied the geographical area of modern day Russia, and parts of Iran and Turkey. Magog, Meshech and Tubal were sons of Japheth. Magog's descendants, according to Josephus², were the Scythians. The Scythians occupied an area above the Black Sea in modern day Ukraine and western Russia.

Gog and Magog are mentioned also in the book of Revelation, which will be covered toward the end of this study. However, it is the author's understanding that in Ezekiel, Magog is a geographical reference, along with Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, while in Revelation Gog and Magog are symbolic references to all nations without Christ which are susceptible to Satanic deception.

Meshech is understood by many biblical and historical scholars as the ancestors of the Russian people. It is believed that several Russian geographical names, such as Moscow, the Meschera tribe and the Meshchera Lowlands, could be related to Meshech.

Tubal, also being a son of Japheth, is almost always coupled with Meshech in scripture. Tubal's descendants are understood to be the Tiberini of the Greek historian Herodotus, a people of the Asiatic highland west of the Upper Euphrates, the southern range of the Caucasus, on the east of the Black Sea.³ In modern terms, this area would include modern day Georgia, and could include Turkish and Iranian areas to the south and Russian areas to the north.

Rosh was the seventh son of Benjamin in Genesis 46:21. The geographical location of Rosh's descendants are difficult to trace, but in this text are relegated to the same general area "*far from the north*" as the other ancient nations referenced. Coincidentally, tracing "*from the far north*" from Israel, in a straight line, one arrives at Moscow, Russia.

² Flavius, Josephus: "Jewish Antiquities", book 1 chapter 6 page 123. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1930.

³ Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

The prophecy is spoken against “Gog,” who is referenced as the ruler of Meshech and Tubal. Specifically he is named as “*the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal*.” To that end, Gog should be understood as a title, such as “Caesar.” Because the prophecy is spoken against Gog, it is apparent that the area consistent with modern day Russia is the leading nation in this attack, as Gog is the chief prince of nations which formerly occupied that geographical area. This is a coalition attack of numerous people groups, in retrospect, fitting well with Jesus’ words examined earlier in Matthew 24 of wide-spread warfare as a birth pain pointing toward the times of the end.

Verses 5 and 6 note other nations involved in the attack: Persia (present day Iran), Cush (modern day Ethiopia), Put (modern day Somalia), Gomer, referred to as *Germania* in the *Midrash* and the *Talmud* (modern day Germany) and Togarmen (Armenia).

Many have attempted to determine the nations involved in this attack by historical evidences rather than the Bible itself. This has led many to turn away from the “Russian” leadership of this attack due to the fall of the former Soviet Union. However, the Bible speaks of the geographic areas of its own day rather than referencing specific modern nations. The fall of the former Soviet Union is irrelevant to the interpretation of this prophecy. Perhaps Russia itself will fall and be named another name. The biblical geography is what is relevant to understanding who is involved, not the names of the modern nations, themselves.

It is tempting to try to interpret the Bible in light of current events. However, the student of eschatology should understand that current events are, in fact, determined by the Bible. The presupposition of this work is that the Bible is unfailing in its teaching and that history will unfold as it has been prophesied. Thus, regardless of the future outcomes of any nations currently occupying these areas, the people who occupy this geography at the time of the attack are being specified in this text.

This coalition is said to be “*from the far North*”, though not all of these nations are North of Israel. The indication is that they are attacking from the North and that their leadership is from the far North (modern day Russia).

In summary, the attackers, unless their names or borders are changed between now and this attack, appear to be Russia, Georgia, possibly Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Germany and Armenia.

Who Is Attacked?

It’s clear that Israel is being attacked, but specifically, it should be noted that it is *modern* Israel which is being attacked, as opposed to the former Israel destroyed in the first century, as only modern Israel fits the description of the text.

Ezekiel 38:7-9

⁷ *"Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them. ⁸ After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety. ⁹ You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.*

Verses 8 and 9 specify the mountains of Israel as the location of this attack, and note that it will be a massive attack *"covering the land."*

Likewise, verse 8 describes what can only be understood as modern Israel, rather than ancient Israel, because it is a land *"that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate."* These statements are not true of Israel in any time prior to current history. Israel has reunited as a nation, from many peoples, and have been rebuilding the communities in the mountains that had long been desolate from their former national existence. While parts of Israel have been desolate long periods of time, only today are those places of long desolation fully rebuilt and flourishing with life again. And, only today can it be accurately said that the rebuilding of those desolate places coincides with the people having been *"gathered from many nations"* with the convergence of the Jewish nation to the land of Israel prior to and since Israel's rebirth as a nation in 1948. Israel has re-gathered from exile to its homeland at former times in history, but not from *"many nations"* as its existence today can be very literally described.

Why will they attack?

Why this coalition will attack Israel is answered in two parts by the text. The first answer is seen in verses 10-13:

Ezekiel 38:10-13

¹⁰ *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme. ¹¹ You will say, 'I will invade a land of unwallled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people--all of them living without walls and without gates and bars. ¹² I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land.' ¹³ Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages will say to you, 'Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?'"*

Verses 10-12 define the incentive for the attack to be for the spoils of war, or, *"plunder & loot."*

I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins

"Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?"

Noted specifically are silver, gold, livestock, goods and general plunder. Understanding Ezekiel's world view, each of these products most likely represent a generalization of the "spoils of war" consistent with Ezekiel's day. In short, the motive will be greed. Israel will have something which the attackers desire to have for their own.

One possible source of desired plunder has been suggested to be the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea is the second largest salt lake on earth, and contains sodium, chlorine, sulfur, potassium, calcium, magnesium & numerous other minerals and chemicals which could be harvested. Its salt content is over 8 times that of the ocean⁴ and among many other anomalies it produces asphalt deposits.⁵ Any number of potential future chemical or mineral needs could cause the Dead Sea to become a commodity of great interest.

Other potential plunder could be energy, as Israel is a global leader in areas of geothermal energy,⁶ diamonds, or Israel's general wealth, being exceptional throughout the Middle East. Whatever the coalition may say of their purpose when this day comes, the Bible states their real purpose for the attack will be greed for some element of plunder.

Ezekiel 38:13 indicates that there are nations which will speak against the coalition for this attack, but in word only. There is no mention of intervention on Israel's behalf by any nation of earth, only God himself.

Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages will say to you, "Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?"

Sheba and Dan are the areas of modern day northern Arabia, while Tarshish and all her villages is a bit more difficult to discern. "All her villages" probably indicates other nations spawned from Tarshish, but determining exactly which geographical area is indicated by the name "Tarshish" is a bit puzzling.

There are several historical regions which have been named Tarshish. Of those which have spawned other nations, one is the city of Tartessos in Southern Spain, or a Tarshish of England.

If the Tarshish of Spain is that referenced by Ezekiel, then "her villages" would be South and most of Central America. If England is the Tarshish referenced by Ezekiel, "her villages" would include the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand & some other western lands.

Who precisely opposes this attack is not relevant to the outcome, however, since their opposition is that of word only, and nothing is done to defend Israel in the attack. What is perhaps the most important deduction from this part of the text is that Sheba, Dan and Tarshish at least understand the true motives of the attack to be that of greed and are not fooled by any other potential excuse.

The second answer to the question of "why will they attack" is answered from God's perspective. Clearly the coalition who is attacking has their own motives, but Ezekiel 38 informs us that God himself has a motive for this attack, for it is he who allows it to take place, and even more so, it is he who instigates this coalition to embark on this attack.

⁴ Goetz, P.W. (ed.) *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (15th ed.). Vol. 3, p. 937. Chicago, 1986

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_sea

⁶ Ginsburg, Mitch. "[A Hotter Holy Land](#)", The Jerusalem Report, [2007-05-28](#).

Ezekiel 38:14-16

¹⁴ "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?' ¹⁵ You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army. ¹⁶ You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, O Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

Verse 16 says, "I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I show myself holy through you before their eyes." From God's perfect perspective, the purposes of this attack are to reveal his glory. Specifically, his glory is to be revealed to "the nations." When this battle is complete, God will have revealed himself in a very powerful way to the world at large. In fact, the conflict will be resolved with God's direct intervention so profoundly that the world will wholly realize that it is God himself who has redeemed Israel from her attackers.

It may seem problematic to some that God himself would inspire nations to do that which could otherwise be considered wrong and ungodly. However, this will certainly not be the first time God has done such a thing. Romans 9:17 states "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.'" God chose for Pharaoh, an ungodly king, to rise to power and hold Israel under the bondage of slavery so that God could demonstrate his power through Pharaoh to the world by destroying his stronghold over Israel. A similar condition will exist in the Gog-Magog war. God will personally instigate this coalition to come against his chosen people so that he can demonstrate his power to the nations of earth.

The context of Ezekiel 38 indicates that this attack will happen in close historical proximity to the beginning of the great tribulation. In chapter 37 God speaks of a coming time when he will do a work which will bring Israel back together as one nation under one king, the Messiah, David's heir. Then, in chapter 40, following this text, a description of the Millennial Temple is given which sandwiches this story between the time God begins his work of redeeming Israel and the time when that redemption is complete, under Messianic rule. Thus, this invasion must be close in proximity to the period of the great tribulation, but it cannot be during the great tribulation for reasons which will be seen later in the text.

It seems, then, that this invasion is a catalyst for the world to begin paying attention to Israel and her estranged God, who will bring her back into his fellowship just a few short years in the future from this event. Being a pre-tribulational event itself, perhaps this invasion is another occurrence likened to the signs of Matthew 24, which will quicken mankind to begin watching the stage of world events for the coming of God's judgments on the whole of the earth.

It will also soon be observed that God's program for the great tribulation has as its secondary purpose to draw men to repentance. The comprehension of God's glory will certainly play a role in that draw. His resolution of this battle will focus the attention of the world to his work.

What will happen as a result?

Essentially, the "what" is answered next.

Ezekiel 38:17-18

¹⁷ *"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Are you not the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel? At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them. ¹⁸ This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

The end result of the attack is that God's "hot anger" will be aroused against the attackers. While the text informs us that God ultimately is behind the attack for his own glory, the attackers desire to loot and plunder Israel of their own sinful accord. God's anger will bring him to rise against the attackers in a most impressive way.

Ezekiel 38:19-23

¹⁹ *In my zeal and fiery wrath I declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. ²⁰ The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. ²¹ I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. ²² I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. ²³ And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'*

God's retaliation against the attackers begins with a massive earthquake. In this quake, even the fish of the sea and the birds of the air are impacted. The statement "*mountains will be overturned*" certainly invokes a realization of the stark magnitude of this event. It will be very impressive and "*all the people on the face of the earth will tremble*" at God's presence. While earthquakes occur daily throughout the earth, rarely is one so significant that it draws world-wide attention. In this case, the whole earth will take note and will fear God, at least in that moment.

With the earthquake drawing the world's attention, what God does next will captivate the world audience, so that his glory can truly be seen by all. Following the quake, the armies begin a conflict within their own ranks. "*Every man's sword will be against his brother,*" perhaps from the panic of the quake itself or from the fear of God's presence which follows it.

Following the civil conflict is a series of plagues of Old Testament reminiscence. "*Torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur*" will be rained down from the heavens upon the enemy of Israel. This is done "*in the sight of many nations.*" Surely in a modern setting the earthquake itself will draw international attention. News crews and dignitaries will flock to the sight. While the world gazes upon the invasion and the earthquake supernatural intervention will literally rain down upon Israel's enemy in the form of rain, hailstones and literal fire from Heaven. How impressive it will be to see burning sulfur raining down from heaven on the seven o'clock news! Indeed, God will make himself known and "*they will know that I am the LORD.*"

Formerly it was considered an impossibility that the entire earth could witness this event as described. Even biblical commentators who lived prior to today's global media had difficulty understanding the possibilities of an event being seen by the whole earth. Yet, today, truly global news coverage is a common occurrence. It is actually somewhat amusing to look at scripture retrospectively through the lens of history. The pragmatically impossible has become reality time and again. Israel *did* become a sovereign nation from the far corners of the earth.

And, world-wide spectacles have become a common event. Even prior to man's ability to comprehend the possibilities of scriptural foresight, God had spoken that which was to be.

When will this happen?

The first observation as to when this attack will happen must be the conclusion that it has not already occurred in the past. For this battle to be prophetically accurate, several historical facts must come together perfectly, the first of which is the general description of the condition of Israel. The land is described in Ezekiel 38:8 as a "*land that has recovered from war,*" and "*whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate.*" As has been noted, this demands an Israel of modern description rather than historic Israel. Additionally, Israel is said to "*live in safety,*" in verse 8, and is said to be made up of "*unwalled villages*" and "*without gates and bars.*" Categorically, these statements describe modern Israel, and no other historical version.

Furthermore, there have been no historic battles against Israel which fit the description of this text: a coalition of numerous nations, led by Gog of modern day Russian geography, which was thwarted by God's hand via plagues of hail, fire and torrential rain, and conducted while the world watched. Clearly this fits no description afforded by recorded history.

The placement of this battle in the context of Ezekiel puts it in between God's drawing Israel together in preparation for the reign of Messiah and the fulfillment of his reign. Thus, this is an event which must take place between the current date and the messianic kingdom. Chapter 39, however, further limits the possibilities of the timeline of this battle.

Ezekiel 39:9-12

⁹ *"Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up--the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. ¹⁰ They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

¹¹ *"On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east toward the Sea. It will block the way of travelers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog.*

¹² *"For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them in order to cleanse the land.*

¹³ *All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I am glorified will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign LORD.*

Continuing his discourse on this battle, Ezekiel states that Israel will use the weapons for fuel for seven years. Specifically mentioned are shields, bows and arrows, war clubs and spears. This has led some to conclude that this army would attack with ancient weapons, and has led to all sorts of speculations as to why that would take place in a modern setting. It seems more reasonable to understand the text as demonstrating a general reference to weapons of war using the known implements of Ezekiel's day. Obviously God is speaking here, and Ezekiel is simply the mouthpiece. However, it seems unlikely that God would speak the names of gunpowder, rocket fuel or diesel to Ezekiel's generation, which would have no idea what was being

discussed. To that end, it seems likely that the reference to weapons of war could be limited by Ezekiel's world view, and instead be understood to indicate an assortment of war weaponry.

In either interpretation, the weapons left behind by the invaders will be gathered and used for fuel for seven years. That insight itself lends more understanding to the timeline of this battle. It will be demonstrated later in this work that beginning at the mid-point of the tribulation, Israel will be under continual persecution and attack by the armies of Antichrist. And from that moment, 3 1/2 years into the tribulation, Israel will be either in flight or in a defensive posture for the duration of the tribulation. In such a position, they would not be wandering the mountains in search of fuel, as the armies of Antichrist will have Jerusalem surrounded, and will occupy a vast area in Israel, making it impossible for the Israelites to wander the open country in search of abandoned weaponry.

Because Antichrist's assault on Israel will begin 3 1/2 years into the tribulation and the collecting of the fuel from the weapons of the Gog-Magog war will last seven years, it can be concluded that the Gog-Magog war will complete at least 3 1/2 years before the beginning of the tribulation. This timeline alone will allow a full seven years to collect fuel before Israel is shut into a defensive posture.

Lastly, it can be concluded from the text that this battle cannot be referring to the battle of Armageddon, as some have erroneously asserted. In Ezekiel 38:8, while describing Israel prior to this attack, it is stated that "*they had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.*" The Hebrew word for "safety" in the NIV is transliterated Heb. *Betah*, and indicates that the nation lives securely, or safely from oppression by enemies. As will be demonstrated later in this study, the battle of Armageddon (which may actually be best understood as several battles) will begin near the end of the great tribulation. It will also be demonstrated that Antichrist will begin to bring hostilities upon Israel in the middle of the tribulation. To that end, they cannot be described as a people "*living in safety*" at the point of the Battle of Armageddon, as they will have been under siege for some time prior to that event. At no time past the mid-point of the tribulation can Israel be described as living in safety, rather quite the contrary.

In conclusion, the Gog-Magog war can be concluded to occur at least 3 1/2 years prior to the beginning of the tribulation, and is one of several pre-tribulational events which should be watched for. For the news-watchers who desperately search for an eschatological sign from every middle eastern fireworks display, this is one that will not be missed. When this conflict has ended, no one will have to ask if this were in fact the Gog/Magog conflict. Unless fire from Heaven becomes a regular occurrence between now and that time, it is relatively safe to assume this event will easily define itself.

THE REVEALING OF ANTICHRIST

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

¹ Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

The phrases "*the coming of our Lord*" and "*our being gathered to him*" have created many questions for students of eschatology. At the heart of the issue is the determination of whether this phrase refers to one event or two. If "*the coming of our Lord and our being gathered to him*" refers to one event, whereby the Lord comes and we are simultaneously gathered, then the question is spawned, "does this refer to the Lord's return to reign, or is it referring to a rapture theology?" If, however, the phrase represents two ideas, the Lord's return and separately, our being gathered to him, then the question may be simpler to answer.

In either case, the apostle refers to "*our being gathered to him*" almost parenthetically in this announcement that "*that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed.*" Clearly, "*that day*" refers to the "*day of the Lord*," or the return of Christ to rule, which is separate from "*our being gathered to him*" if one sees that phrase as a rapture event. Contextually, Paul was already speaking specifically about the day of the Lord. It is this event alone which he speaks to. Yet, he does add "*our being gathered to him*" to the thought, creating the question as to whether he is referring to a separate event which fits well into a rapture theology.

In the end, it is not possible to know for certain if Paul parenthetically refers to a rapture from this text alone. Nor is it essential to determine for Paul's warning to be understood. Neither interpretation changes the timing of the revealing of "*the man of lawlessness*," or the Antichrist, as an event which will precede the coming of the day of the Lord.

At this point, some devotion to the phrase "*day of the Lord*" must be given. The phrase "day of the Lord" is a common theme in prophetic writings and is an exceptionally important theme in eschatology. How nice it would be if there were an answer key in the back of the Bible to inform readers of key phrases and their meanings. But, as there is no such key, repetitive phrases such as "*the day of the Lord*" must be determined systematically, by examining their usage throughout the Bible.

When the phrase "*day of the Lord*" occurs in scripture, it has two nuances, both of which refer to the last days, specifically, the great tribulation. The most common usage is a general depiction of the great tribulation. A more rare and specific usage articulates the very end of the tribulation, notably the specific moment of the return of Christ. While this work is not a systematic study on this phrase, it will be examined numerous times which will assist in demonstrating this truth. To that end, further examination of this phrase will not be conducted in this chapter. Suffice it to say, however, that the phrase "*day of the Lord*" will always refer to the great tribulation in scripture. At times it will refer specifically to the very end of the tribulation, the return of Christ,

but most commonly it is a general depiction of the great tribulation, which concludes with Christ's return.

The usage of "*the day of the Lord*" in this text is of the more general nature. It refers to the general season of the great tribulation rather than the specific event of the return of Christ. Contextually, in 2 Thessalonians 1, Paul had set up this usage with a discussion of the events of this coming day of the Lord. He notes in 1 Thessalonians 1:7 of the coming judgments of Christ, "*This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*" As this study continues, it will be observed that the judgments of the great tribulation will involve fire from Heaven and are usually administered by angels. More on this will be discussed in the chapters on the great tribulation, but for important note at this time is the understanding that the "*day of the Lord*" refers to the pouring out of these judgments, which precede the specific return of Christ, and render the more general usage of "day of the Lord" in this context.

To conclude the timing of the revealing of Antichrist from this text, then, it is understood that he will be revealed prior to the day of the Lord, or prior to the great tribulation; the day Paul speaks of which will be the period of punishment for those who have rebelled against the Lord. Thus, the revealing of Antichrist is a pre-tribulational event.

Furthermore, it will be observed later in this study that the beginning of the tribulation period is *defined* by a specific act of Antichrist: the signing of a covenant between himself and Israel. One does not sign a treaty with a sovereign nation without a well-established identity and a position of power from which to barter such an agreement. Antichrist will be revealed, then, by merit of his position and other indicators which will be discussed shortly, before the beginning of the great tribulation.

ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST

The "*man of lawlessness*" noted in 2 Thessalonians 2, above, bears the name "Antichrist" in First and Second John. Antichrist is one of the most key players on earth during the great tribulation, filling an important role as an agent of Satan. And, although Antichrist is a being of satanic origins and purpose, he is also used of God to bring judgment to the earth and to unfold God's foretold plans among the nations.

As his name indicates, the Antichrist will appear as a divine entity, doing miraculous things, even being resurrected. He is of Satan, not God, and is not divine, but he is a great deceiver and will proclaim himself to be divine and will exalt himself as God. While some people have difficulty with the idea of a being having supernatural powers, biblical theology teaches that Satan and the angelic realm are created on a higher order than that of man. As such, they have powers beyond those of man, yet are not divine. They are created beings, lower than the creator himself, but higher and more powerful than man.

To that end, Antichrist is a false Christ in every way, even down to his supernatural incarnation, which will be discussed momentarily, and will make his life's work the deception of as many as possible. He will cause men to follow him, and vicariously, his master, Satan.

An early biblical description of Antichrist's campaign is seen in the book of Daniel. In chapter 9 a picture is given of Antichrist's role in the tribulation.

Daniel 9:24-27

²⁴ "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

²⁵ "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him".

The term "sevens" is likened to the English term "dozen." It means a "seven" of something, as "dozen" means twelve of something. And like using the term "dozen," the only way to determine what the "seven" is of, is the context from which one speaks. In the context of Daniel's writing, he has been speaking in terms of periods of time. And, in each case, his time periods have consistently been rendered in years. Thus a "seven" in this context is seven years.

Daniel begins in verse 25 with "seven sevens," or 49 years. 49 years, or the first seven sevens, was described as the time required to rebuild Jerusalem after the decree was issued to do so.

Daniel follows with "sixty two sevens," or 434 years in verse 25 as the time from the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem until the Messiah would come.

Following the sixty two sevens a break is observed in the text:

²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

At this point, the "Anointed One," or Jesus, is "cut off," which in historical retrospect, demands to be understood as referring to his crucifixion. It is at this time that the first reference to Antichrist is observed.

The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

This phrase bears two important notices concerning Antichrist. First, it speaks of a ruler "who will come" at a future point in history. This ruler does not come immediately, but after a break, which is described next. This ruler is understood from a systematic study of scripture to be the Antichrist. As this work continues, it will be seen that this ruler fits the description of Antichrist in New Testament references.

Secondly, this phrase notes that Antichrist is of the same people as those who will destroy the city, or Jerusalem. Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, 434 years after it was completed, by Rome. Therefore, Rome is the people of "the ruler who will come," which demands that the Antichrist will be of Roman descent. While it is increasingly difficult to determine Roman descent in modern times, still this clue to Antichrist's heritage is given and should be considered when the time comes for attempting to reveal Antichrist's identity.

Verse 26 then states, *“War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.”*

This sentence stands alone in the series of sevens. It is not part of the former seven, but refers to a period which connects the sixty two sevens from the last seven. It is a break in the timeline between the last two groupings of sevens. *“The end”* refers to the last seven. War continuing *“until the end,”* then, notes a gap of time whereby Israel will continue in war until the time of the end arrives. Consequently, Israel has not had peace from the time of the destruction of the city to this very day. Fighting in the Gaza strip is a normal condition of life. Attacks by Hezbollah and other terrorist groups are continual; so much so that life in Israel will hardly give pause after a suicide bombing or direct military attack.

War continuing until *“the end”* refers not only to the last seven, but to the end of the story, or the end of times, when *“desolations have been decreed”* and God is ready to put the wheels into motion and begin the last seven of the series. In eschatological study, *“the end”* is synonymous with the last seven, or the tribulation period. When the tribulation period ends, so does the current age, and the new age of the millennial reign begins.

With the ending of the break and the beginning of the final seven, the last seven years of life in this age begin with Antichrist playing his very important role.

Verse 27 describes the final seven:

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him”.

“He,” or Antichrist, is one and the same as the “beast” of the book of Revelation, and the final seven is the final seven years of life on earth prior to the Millennial Reign of Christ. Daniel only shows a glimpse of Antichrist's program in this text, yet it is clear that he is a key player, having the authority to halt temple worship and exalt himself as God in the temple. These actions will be demonstrated in detail later in this work, but for now, as an introduction to Antichrist it should be observed that his is a person of great political and religious relevance in the great tribulation. He will exalt himself to the highest possible positions in both realms. Politically, he will essentially be the king of the world, while religiously he will exalt and proclaim himself to be the very God of Heaven. His title of “Antichrist” is very fitting; for he is everything in substance which is opposed to the legitimate Christ, all the while imitating Christ's program through counterfeit measures in an attempt to gain the trust and worship of the earth.

Antichrist's nature

Another key truth to grasp about Antichrist, in order to understand his role in the tribulation is to note that he is in some way satanic in nature. In the context of any serious study of eschatology from a literal perspective, one understands clearly that Antichrist is given a great amount of power. He will be a master deceiver, yet will have an impressive array of supernatural abilities which will give credibility to his claim to godhood. It is at this point that the biblical student must come to terms with his nature so as to determine exactly how he is empowered to do the things he will be able to do. He is either fully demonic, demon possessed, or in some other way receiving a great amount of dark spiritual power. The question is, “exactly how?” Being fully demonic is easily ruled out, because Antichrist is noted to be a man in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, being

called "*the man of lawlessness*." And, being *only* a man is also ruled out by a truth which will be observed later in this work, whereby Antichrist will be cast into the Abyss, a place where throughout the entire Bible only demons are ever sentenced.

These truths lend one to lean toward Antichrist being a sort of hybrid man/demon, since he clearly exhibits characteristics of the demonic while also being called a man. But how does one come to be a hybrid between demon and man? How would such an entity come to be?

There are several scriptural clues as to how exactly Antichrist draws his Satanic power, and more specifically, how he came to his unique nature. The first clue is found in 2 Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders."

The phrase rendered "*in accordance with the work of Satan*" in the NIV is translated from the Greek term *energeo*, which means "*to be energized of*" Satan. This clue notes, then, that it was Satan himself who empowered "*the coming*" of Antichrist. To understand that Antichrist is energized of Satan is not a terribly fascinating revelation. Yet, in the context of the text it is specifically noted that "*the coming of*" Antichrist is energized of Satan, or stated differently, "*his advent*" is energized of Satan. Thus, Antichrist's very existence is inspired in some way from Satan's power and work. It will be Satan's work and power which will render Antichrist onto the playing field, albeit with God's full permit, as nothing happens without God's knowledge and permission.

The second clue is found in Genesis.

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵ *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

Spoken in judgment against the serpent for the deception leading to man's fall, Genesis 3:15 is noted from almost every theological background and perspective to be a Messianic prophecy. The "*offspring*" of the woman is understood by biblical students of vastly differing viewpoints alike to represent the coming Christ, who would crush the head of the serpent. And, most who accept this position also allow that the prophecy is spoken to Satan himself, rather than to the serpent. The prophecy "*you will strike his heel*" clearly doesn't speak to all serpent-kind, but uniquely to an individual; "*you*." It is Satan's head which Christ will crush, not the head of some future random snake. While this position is accepted throughout Christendom, what is not as frequently discussed is the answer to the question, "*who is Satan's offspring?*" If Christ is the woman's offspring, who is the offspring of Satan that will have enmity toward Christ?

If the offspring of the woman is a unique individual, then the offspring of Satan must also be understood to be unique personage. That person will be demonstrated to be the coming Antichrist; the offspring to be energized of Satan himself.

The mere mention of the idea that Satan, a fallen angelic being, could have an offspring sends many scurrying for the cover of another possible translation for Genesis 3:15. The text itself, however, simply states its prophecy and moves on. It is up to the biblical student to uncover the ramifications of it and build a theology of the future offspring of Satan which is noted in the text.

The questions remaining lead to a place which many dare not tread. Those questions are beyond the latitude of acceptance of many, yet find their answers clearly from scriptural study. The first question is "how will Satan produce an offspring?" The second question is, "how can Satan's offspring be called a man and yet have a demonic nature?" The answers are found in a single statement of answer: Satan will procreate Antichrist through a human host. This answer is not one of convenience, but rather, one which comes from biblical consideration on the subject. Indeed, there is a wealth of scriptural content concerning this issue which will shortly be examined.

This answer to these questions is simple and biblical, yet is difficult to accept by many. Likewise the concepts of Virgin birth, the resurrection of the dead and the eternal nature of the spirit are simple and biblical, yet hard to accept by many. Never in the Bible is the supernatural characteristic of a principle grounds for dismissal. If it were, we would dismiss our very Lord on the grounds that he cannot possibly be "eternal." In fact, nearly every attribute of God's own character is supernatural in origin. Never should the difficulty of human grasp be a cause to reject a biblical principle. The following section will give a biblical roadmap of evidence which supports not only the *possibility* of Antichrist being spawned of Satan himself, but also evidence that all processes required to achieve such demonic procreation have been formerly observed in scripture.

The thread which introduces biblical revelation of how demonic procreation can happen begins only a few short chapters further into Genesis, in the portrayal of the Nephilim of Genesis 6.

The Feasibility of Angelic/Human Procreation

The immediate objection by many to the position that Antichrist is the product of the copulation of Satan and a human host is that it is impossible for angels to procreate. After all, Satan is a cherub; an angelic being for which there is no biblical description of family life, marriage or procreation.

That objection, however, is not accurate, for an objective examination of scripture tells another story.

Genesis 6:1-4

¹ When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal ; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

The narrative of Genesis 6 reverences a specific group of Nephilim, a race of giants which lived on the earth at that time. The term "*Nephilim*" has a simple and literal meaning, which is simply understood as "giants." Nothing more should be noted about the term Nephilim unless otherwise gleaned from the text in which that term resides. Certainly there are giants appearing later in scripture, such as the offspring of Anak in Numbers 13. Nothing is noted of the sons of Anak except that they were in fact Nephilim, or giants. They were perhaps large because of normal genetic processes, much like is observed in the animal kingdom. Any given species of creature

can vary from very small members, such as the miniature pony, to larger members, such as the Clydesdale, without any requisite supernatural intervention. Truly it is possible for normal genetic processes to vary the size of any species, including man. Thus, the term "*Nephilim*" doesn't necessitate an outside supernatural influence to account for the size of a race of people.

The Nephilim of Genesis 6, however, were in fact noted to be unique to other Nephilim which are mentioned in scripture. These Nephilim originated through a special set of circumstances.

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days--and also afterward--when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them.

Specifically, it is noted that these Nephilim were the product of "*the sons of God*" and "*the daughters of men*." There was something distinctive about the combination of the sons of God and the daughters of men which created a unique species of giants. The Nephilim of Genesis 6 were a product of the breeding of these two groups.

Biblical students have challenged this text throughout history to answer the question "who are the sons of God?" The daughters of men is simple enough, but who are the sons of God, and why are they given that particular name? Some contend that the sons of God refer to godly people who were true to their fellowship with the Lord and the daughters of men were ungodly people who rebelled against God, or "the lost," if you will. Yet this interpretation does not account for how the marriage of the godly and the ungodly would produce a race of giants. Godly people have married ungodly people throughout history. While it is not a good idea nor a biblical practice, never has it been observed that a godly person having children with an ungodly person will produce an offspring which will grow into a giant. It seems the earth would team with giants if that were the case. One could not rightly restate this text to inform that "giants were on the earth from when godly people went to ungodly people and had children by them." While it is a simpler, and perhaps easier to accept position, it clearly falls short of the intent of the text, which is to demonstrate *how* the Nephilim came to be upon the earth. Godly people and ungodly people simply do not produce giants in demonstrable genetics.

Furthermore, this interpretation does not account for God's sudden destruction of the earth via the flood, which is the very next event in the narrative. If there are a goodly number of godly people called "the sons of God" who married ungodly people, the "daughters of men," then why does God proclaim his judgment later in the chapter against the entire world on the basis of there *being no godly people* on the earth other than Noah's family? It is clear from the text that Noah's family alone found favor in God's eyes. It is not likely, then, that the sons of God would refer to godly people of only one generation prior.

There is a better and more meaningful interpretation.

The phrase "*sons of God*" is translated from the Hebrew term *bane 'elohiym*, which is quite literally rendered "*sons of God*" in English, yet is rendered differently throughout the Old Testament in several English translations. This is one of thousands of scriptural references in which a metaphorical term is used as a reference for something literal. "Sons of God" is a Hebrew idiom for angelic beings throughout the Old Testament. Just as Jesus is referred to as a "lamb" throughout the New Testament, angels are referred to as the "sons of God" in Old Testament passages. Several examples are found in Job, using the same exact Hebrew phrase, *bane 'elohiym*, yet being translated "angels" rather than "sons of God."

Job 1:6-7

⁶ One day the angels (*bane 'elohiym*) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

The NIV translates *bane 'elohiym* as "angels" in Job 1:6, as do various other translations. While many prominent translations use the more literal rendering, "sons of God," the context clearly exhibits that "angels" is a good translation. It is not possible for a human "son of God" to have approached the throne of God and present himself to the Lord. When this text is taught and preached throughout the globe *bane 'elohiym* is almost universally understood to be referring to angels in this scripture. Whether the English translation states "sons of God" or "angels," the interpreter knows from the context that the *meaning* of the phrase refers to angels.

Likewise, Job 38:6-7 states:

*6 On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone--
7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels (bane 'elohiym) shouted for joy?*

Once again the NIV uses the term "angels" to translate *bane 'elohiym* while others, such as the KJV, use the more stringent "sons of God" for the same text. Yet clearly, again, the context indicates that "angels" is the right translation, for the context dictates that surely the phrase *bane 'elohiym* refers to angels rather than a human "son" of God as some would desire the Genesis 6 passage to refer to. Furthermore, the parallelism in the text compares the "sons of God" to the "morning stars." Parallelism, in Hebrew poetry, is a means of presenting a verse by stating a phrase two times in two different ways. In this case, the first phrase uses the term "morning stars," a metaphorical name for literal angels, and the second phrase uses the term "sons of God," also a metaphorical name for literal angels.

While *bane 'elohiym* only occurs a few times in the Old Testament, every usage is consistent in its meaning, and in each usage the phrase refers to "angels" rather than common man. If *bane 'elohiym* refers to angels elsewhere, why should it not have the same meaning in Genesis 6? The common sentiment seems to be that using the translation of "angels" creates problems with interpretation. In reality, however, using the term "angels" clears up many problems with interpretation, since that understanding alone gives a proper light to the context. If ungodly people have children with godly people, they produce common people of normal genetic stature; not giants. However, if angels have children with humans, however wild it sounds, it certainly fits the context of Genesis 6 in that the product of that conception could create an unpredictable outcome; in this case, a race of giants.

Some claim Matthew 22:30 as a hindrance to the doctrine of angelic-human procreation.

Matthew 22:30

³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

This text clearly notes that the angels in heaven neither marry nor are they given in marriage. However, the phrase "like the angels in Heaven" does not indicate that angels are incapable of procreation, but it indicates that the angels of Heaven are not given in marriage, which leads some to the understanding that they do not procreate. It is biblically plausible, however, that the

angels of Heaven are in fact *capable* of sexuality. The fact that they are not given in marriage does not negate the possibility of having reproductive capabilities. It is entirely logical that they do have the capability to procreate, but are obedient to not utilize their sexuality. One may rightly state also that the angels of Heaven do not serve Satan. Yet, angels are clearly *capable* of serving Satan, for one-third of the angels at a previous point in history chose to rebel against God, and currently *do* serve Satan, while the angels of Heaven do not. Jesus' note concerning marriage is not that it is impossible for angels to procreate, but rather, that the angels of Heaven-righteous angels who serve God- do not do so. Jesus' response concerned itself with what is proper rather than what is possible.

Men are created with the capability for procreation, yet obedience to Christ mandates that a man restrain himself until marriage to utilize that capability. Thus, the godly man who is unmarried will restrain himself from his God-given capability for sexual intimacy out of obedience to God while the ungodly man may not.

The "*angels of Heaven*" are elect angels; righteous angels who did not sin when Satan rebelled against God. This text does not mention, however, the angels that did rebel; the demons. Demonic angels are disobedient by their very nature. In fact, all scriptural evidence suggests that a demonic angel would certainly fulfill the fruition of any sinful action possible. If it is *possible* for the angels of Heaven to procreate, yet they do not do so out of obedience, then it is possible- and even likely- that the disobedient angels would choose to go against their nature and procreate out of disobedience to God, and perhaps even in obedience to a direct call of Satan. Numerous theologians who accept this interpretation of Genesis 6 commonly believe this demonic intervention into the lives of mankind, or the daughters of men, was an attempt to corrupt the seed of woman. In this attempt, it is thought that Satan desired to thwart the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 and preventing the offspring of woman, Jesus, from bashing the head of Satan, as prophesied.

Interestingly, the very next verses following the account of the Nephilim demonstrate that God's favor was turned against mankind.

Genesis 6:5-8

⁵The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Genesis 6:11-12 continues,

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.

Clearly the action of the "*sons of God*" having children with the "*daughters of men*" was a serious offense to God; so much so that it is referenced as an example of the wickedness on earth as a precursor to God's destruction of it.

Further evidence of a demonic perversion of the seed of man is found in the book of Jude.

Jude 1:6-7

⁶ *And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.* ⁷ *In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.*

Jude's account requires some knowledge of the book of Enoch, from which he references his illustration. The book of Enoch is a non-canonical and extra-biblical book. It is not the basis of biblical theology. Yet, Jude quotes Enoch directly in verses 14-15, giving strong credibility to the idea that Jude writes verse 6 with Enoch's writings in mind as well. Jude is using Enoch's testimony to make his own argument. And, the book of Enoch, though non-biblical, tells the story of demons procreating with humans to create a race of Giants. It further tells of God locking those angels away in the deepest regions of fire and torment because of their actions.

For Jude to make the statement, "*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day*" in context with other quotes from Enoch indicates that it is in fact Enoch's account of demonic and human conception which these angels are guilty of committing. While Enoch is not part of the Bible, Jude is. And, Jude is giving credibility to that certain part of Enoch's writing by quoting it, though not the whole of the book.

But, Jude 7 gives an even more direct indication of the actions which caused these particular angels to be bound when he states, "*In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.*" Setting the book of Enoch aside, Jude clearly writes the offense of the angels who were bound is equated to the sexual perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah.

These angels have done something specifically evil in God's sight that they are bound in "everlasting chains". Being bound in everlasting chains is a unique state for demons. The only other time angels are referred to as being put into everlasting chains are those cast into "tartarus" in 2 Peter 2:4. Other angels are cast into the "Abyss" periodically (the Abyss will be dealt with later in this work) which is a temporary holding place for disobedient demons. These are later released, as their sentence is not eternal. Tartarus, however, is eternal, as is the punishment of the Jude 6 angels who committed a certain specific act of sin that God sentenced them firmly to this place until the time of their judgment, at the end of days.

In conclusion, there is a clear biblical thread of evidence that angels, hurled to earth in rebellion, which we refer to as demons, gave themselves up to sexual perversion, and they, the *bane 'elohiym*, interbred with the daughters of men, creating the Nephilim of Genesis 6:4, "*when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them.*"

This is a difficult teaching for many to grasp, but it plays an important role in the understanding of Antichrist. Suddenly, the idea of Antichrist being "*in accordance with the work of Satan,*" or literally being *energized* of Satan has fuller meaning from scriptural study. It is well within the realm of scriptural latitude for Satan to impregnate a woman and create a demonic human who will serve as his counterfeit son, Antichrist.

Antichrist's Role in Satan's Counterfeit Program

Though it is too rarely focused on in eschatological study, there is a clear teaching in scripture of Satan's counterfeiting work in his final program. Through the course of this study this counterfeiting will be identified on several levels.

The name "Antichrist" is not accidental in scripture. As the name implies, this being will be the antithesis of the person of Jesus Christ, yet will do all he can to emulate what Christ did in his ministry on earth. Just as Pharaoh's magicians performed their demonic versions of the miracles of Moses, so Satan will attempt to re-create the person of Jesus Christ in Antichrist. Antichrist will, in effect, be Satan's attempt to "do Jesus" better than Jesus did. More importantly, Antichrist will be Satan's attempt to deceive the nations into believing that Christ has come to earth in the flesh prior to his actual return. In the Olivet Discourse discussed earlier, Jesus notes this reality specifically.

Matthew 24:23-25

²³ *At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.*

²⁴ *For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.* ²⁵ *See, I have told you ahead of time.*

"At that time" refers back to verse 15, "*so when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation.'"* It will be demonstrated later in this work that the timing of the abomination of desolation is in the middle of the tribulation. Thus, "at that time" in Matthew 24:23 refers to the timing of the center of the great tribulation. Jesus warns, then, that "*at that time*" people will say, "*Look, here is the Christ!*" or "*There he is!*" Satan will repeatedly attempt to convince the world that Antichrist is the returning King. These facets of tribulational deception will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 5. But at this point it should be understood that Antichrist will be presented in every possible way to appear as the true Christ.

The first step in Satan's deception is realized from Antichrist's illegitimate conception. Through this process, Antichrist will become Satan's counterfeit "son." Just as the true Son, Jesus Christ, had a legitimate virgin birth, so Satan's program will demand that the false christ have a virgin birth via Satan's own copulation with a human woman, of Roman descent.

As Satan's program for the earth unfolds, it will be demonstrated that the counterfeit son will establish a covenant with Israel, who rejected the true Christ's covenant. Antichrist will establish himself as God in the Temple, creating the abomination of desolation. He will have a counterfeit death and resurrection. Satan will also produce a counterfeit Holy Spirit, who will be known as "the False Prophet," leaving Satan himself as the counterfeit "father" of the unholy trinity of the great tribulation on earth. Thus, the illegitimate demonic copulation of Antichrist involves more than a strange incarnation. It involves an attempt at counterfeiting the person of Christ, being born of supernatural conception, but by Satanic means.