

The Coming of the  
Lord Jesus  
and the  
Great Tribulation

by

W. H. CLARE

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# *The Coming of the Lord Jesus and the Great Tribulation*

by W. H. CLARE.

IN seeking to understand prophetic truth attention should be paid to certain GAP PERIODS disclosed in the Old Testament. One such period is found in Daniel 9. 24-27. In the first place the reference is not to weeks of days as in Chapter 10. 2, but to seventy sevens or septads, and the nature of the "seven" has to be discovered from the context. In this case it must be interpreted as years like the seventy years of Jeremiah's prophecy, so that the prophecy relates to seventy weeks of years, and covers a period of 490 years. This period was to start with the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem, and sixty-nine of these weeks of years, i.e. 483 year would end just before the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The date when the command went forth would appear to have been the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, Neh. 2. 1, as agreed by Petavius, Ussher, Lloyd, Marshall, and particularly by Sir Robert Anderson in his book, "The Coming Prince."

A close examination of this passage (Dan. 9. 24-27) reveals the fact that the time factor in the prophecy ceases just before the death of Christ, so far as the sixty-nine weeks of years are concerned. Then in the gap there is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 under Titus, but from the death of Christ to this event no time is recorded, and it is in this gap that the era of grace has been running its course with the calling out of the Church comprising Jew and Gentile, both of God's grace, and through the redemptive work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 16. 25-26 the truth of this Church is declared to be a "mystery", revealed in the Gospel and concerning which there was no direct prophetic utterance in the Old Testament. While the gap was foreordained by God, what would take place during that period was not disclosed, apart from the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. When this period is over the remaining portion, i.e. the seven years, to make up the 490 will run its course leading up to the bringing in of everlasting righteousness and the anointing of the most holy or the holy of holies.

We are told, in 1 Cor. 15. 52, that at the coming again of the Lord Jesus (to the AIR), for the Church, the sleeping saints

will be raised, and the living saints changed, and this will take place in a moment without fixing a time for it, or laying down conditions concerning it, and so that we do not miss the simple language a phrase is added—in the twinkling of an eye—which can only be the work of the Omnipotent God. Then a statement is made that it will be at the last trump. This should not be read as though the trumpets mentioned in the Book of Revelation will precede or anticipate the last trump. In verse 45 we have mention of the first man Adam, and the last Adam which is our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the first and last here comprise only two persons. In the same way we should take the last trump as to be the last of those which have preceded it. The first trump since the first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ could only be in reference to His ascension, for we read in Psa. 47. 5 "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Here we must take our minds back to 2 Sam. 6. 12-15 when the ark of the Lord was brought up with shouting and the sound of a trumpet, and reading Ps. 24 we view a picture of our Lord in making His glorious ascension, and entry into Heaven itself. The everlasting doors and gates were shut to men because of sin, but as the Lord Jesus Christ quietly rises from Olivet as indicated in Acts 1. 11, with only His faithful few followers seeing Him, the clouds becoming His chariot and all in Heaven become aware and the cry goes up—"lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in," and when the question is asked "Who is the King of Glory?" the answer is given—"The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." It is the Lord Jesus Christ victorious over sin and death and hell, and so—God has gone up with a shout, the sound of a trumpet.

His Coming Again therefore, with the mention of the last trump must be within the orbit of the age of grace connected with the "mystery" since the first mention of the trumpet is connected with His ascension.

The resurrection of the saints when some will go to Heaven without dying being a "mystery" not revealed in the Old Testament will account for them meeting the Lord in the air before the commencement of the tribulation—the great.

In this connection a general survey is necessary. We read in Isaiah Chap. 9. 6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsel-

lor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." From this it would appear that Christ would come and immediately set up His kingdom, and turning to Matthew 20. 17-21 we read of the mother of Zebedee's children asking that her two sons might sit on the right hand and the left hand IN HIS KINGDOM, but you will observe that it is here that the Lord Jesus Christ introduced the prophetic truth that He is going to Jerusalem to die—and this is told the disciples apart.

If you read Isaiah 61. 2 you will see that it is stated that the Lord would come and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, whereas a reference to Luke 4. 19 tells us that the Lord divided the verse, and the second half is postponed to some future day. Therefore the elasticity of the prophetic Scriptures must be allowed for, until finality is revealed in connection therewith, so far as we are able to understand. Therefore I suggest that no definition should be accepted based on one verse, if in the orbit of the dispensation referred to, there is a further, fuller, and more definite scripture to alter the definition.

Turning to 2 Peter 1. 16 we are told that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the POWER and COMING (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ; but were eyewitnesses of HIS MAJESTY." DID the coming mentioned here mean His coming at birth? I suggest that it does not, but indicates His presence with His disciples on the mount of transfiguration. The Old Testament refers to one coming for the first advent, and this Scripture refers to another coming during His lifetime, so that the first advent included birth, life and coming to the Mount, and His death, and His second advent will also be over a period of time.

If we read Matt. 24. 3 in connection with the second advent we will observe that three things are dealt with (1) the destruction of Jerusalem, and (2) sign of His coming, and (3) the end of the age. In giving an answer to the sign of His coming and the end of the age our Lord uses a picture saying v. 36 to 42 that as it was in the days of Noah so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be (see also Luke 17. 26). The idea here is certainly in connection with earthly rule, and if you take the days that were before the flood, you will observe that Enoch also had the same truth of what was coming, i.e. the flood, for he named his son Methuselah which means—when he is dead it will be sent, and from this you can understand that he meant the flood. Now Enoch went to heaven BEFORE the flood,

and Noah did not go to heaven but was preserved through the judgment of the flood, and at the end of the flood he entered upon a government period on the earth, therefore from this teaching it is suggested that the Lord is coming to the AIR, and then the great tribulation, which will be a judgment period on earth, is to be followed by the government being upon His shoulders.

We can only accept this definition if it is confirmed in the Epistles, so we turn to 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10 and read how they turned to God to serve and to wait for His Son from heaven, and the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as our Deliverer out of coming wrath. Mr. W. E. Vine writing about this says "the question whether 'ek' here means 'out of the midst of' or 'away from' is to be determined by some statement of Scripture where the subject is specifically mentioned; that is provided, e.g. in Chap. 5. 9 the context of which makes clear that believers are to be delivered from (not out of) the Divine wrath to be executed on the Nations at the end of the present age."

In connection with these Scriptures it is certain that the Christians then were daily expecting their Lord to return.

In Chap. 2. 19 you have the coming referred to as the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ IN HIS PAROUSIA which is not an act or even an event, but more, for it means a stay to follow on arrival, and would certainly refer to the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with His saints above the earth for the bema—judgment seat (1 Cor. 6. 2) and the marriage of the Lamb, and the supper, for it is there that the saints will share with their Lord in the administration of judgment on earth.

Chap. 3, verse 13 will give us the same truth, and the mention of the word "with" all His saints, does not appear to refer to the Lord coming WITH all His saints, but means in connection with so as to indicate that not one will be left behind when He comes to the air.

Turning to Chap. 4, v. 15 we are told that the descent of the Lord to the air will be with a shout, which is a word of command (see Acts 9. 4-7 and John 12. 29-30) and you will be able to appreciate that a voice can be sounded, and only a certain few can understand its meaning.

The use of the word "we" included Paul, and at the same time applies to those who will be on earth when the Lord comes again. Paul did not say "ye", nor did he refer to those who would be on earth when he had gone. Paul was prepared for the coming of the Lord to the air—though—

like us—he was prepared to go through death if the Lord did not come, but this did not alter his expectation.

In Chapter 5. 9-10 we read "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we watch or sleep we should live together with Him." Here we have references to the outpouring of the wrath of God which will be sudden destruction, and the word "not" is emphatic. We are "not" appointed to wrath. The salvation is the consummation, and telling of the deliverance of the believer from the wrath of God. Those who watch will go, and those who sleep, for this sleep does not refer to sleep in death, but to those Christians who are not watching so that all will go without qualification or limitation—all who belong to Christ.

The word "unto" in verse 23 should be "in"—that is—in the presence of our Lord at His parousia, and this will continue until His Epiphaneia.

After this first Epistle had been sent to the Thessalonians there might have been a reply to it from the saints, but now it reached the Apostle we are not told, but his second Epistle is evidently a reply to their communication to him.

It would appear to be very clear from the reading of this second Epistle that confusion had arisen among the saints over the day of the Lord. Paul had taught them that they would be delivered from it, and some apparently were saying that the Church was still there, also that the day of the Lord had arrived, so in order to rectify this misunderstanding he writes to them again. The day of the Lord is predicted in the Old Testament and the sphere of its operation is the earth, whereas the PAROUSIA is not revealed in the Old Testament—it being a mystery—and is to take place in the AIR, and can be looked forward to with JOY.

Before considering the trumpets mentioned in the Book of Revelation we should view this portion of Scripture as a whole.

In Chapter 1. 19 we read "write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" which undoubtedly indicate how the book must be viewed.

1. What had been "seen" is stated in Chapter 1—the Lord glorified, and in the midst of His Church.

2. "The things which are" is without a doubt the church on earth in testimony as shewn in Chaps. 2 and 3.

3. Then after this Church finishes on earth we are led to understand what will take place in heaven and on earth, and John is invited up into heaven to see and hear what would take place AFTER these things. Let us here remember that the translation of the saints at the coming of the Lord has been hitherto referred to as a "mystery".

4. Between Chapter 4 and Chapter 20 there is another division at Chapter 11. 18, this portion being co-terminus with Chapter 20.

After Chapter 4, the churches are not seen on earth, and it is after Chapter 5 that the seven years of unfulfilled prophecy begin to come into operation, but how long after the removal of the Church to heaven we are not told.

The days of the great tribulation are referred to in three ways i.e. 42 months; time, times and half a time; and 1260 days. This tribulation is quite distinct from the many tribulations through which the saints have gone in all the ages past and present. Its outstanding nature is seen in Jer. 30. 7 "Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble" and this is confirmed in Matt. 24. 21 "For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be." The tribulation will be that through which righteous Jews and Gentiles will pass, but the wrath of God will be against apostate Jews and Christendom. The righteous Jews would appear to have enemies, one being the Assyrian (Micah. 5. 5) which will be their enemy outside the land of Palestine, and the other will be the Antichrist or false prophet who also will be their king within the land and will be acting in conjunction with the Gentile Prince.

The signal for the commencement of the great tribulation is given in Rev. 12. There we read of a great sign of a woman being with child. This appears to refer to Israel and the birth of the Messiah and Isaiah 66. 7 says that "before her pain came she was delivered of a man child". It is evident that the "pain" refers to the time of great tribulation, but before that comes the man child is born, and this order is confirmed in Rev. 12. War in heaven follows between Michael and his angels and the Dragon and his angels, the Dragon certainly being Satan in his murderous devouring nature. As soon as the adversary is cast out he imparts satanic power to the Gentile Prince (Rev. 13. 2) who makes war with the saints. This is one of the chief events

of the period for he overcomes these righteous people (Rev. 13. 7) and his power is extended over the whole earth. Idolatry is forced upon the people by his agent, the false prophet, who is also led by satanic power. He also makes an image, or gets the people to make it, and this will be the "abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel and referred to in Matt. 24. 15. The Temple or Holy place is disowned by God (Rev. 11. 2) during 42 months or 3½ years, the last of the seven years. It is also then that the two witnesses prophesy.

In Rev. Chap. 7. 144,000 out of Israel are sealed, and in Chap. 12. 13, we see the Dragon carrying out his great persecution but God will preserve His own though it seems that those in Jerusalem will suffer death while others will flee to the mountains, as indicated in Matt. 24. 16, and escape as shewn in Rev. 12. 14. As Satan was defeated when he tried to slay the young Child Jesus he will not be allowed to destroy the people of Israel. Satan is now the god of this age, the Prince of the power of the air, but his being cast down to earth will bring about the predicted time of trouble.

Apart from the two special witnesses and the preaching of the angel in Chapter 14. 6 Jews will have a special place in the witness of God on earth, and many Gentiles will also be blessed through them. In Matt. 24 there are three classes, namely, brethren (Jews), sheep (Gentiles), and goats, those who reject all that has been revealed by God concerning His Christ and His salvation through the blood of the Lamb. These latter understand the wrath of the Lamb has come—in that day—as shown in Rev. 6. 16, 17. In connection with the trumpets consideration should be given to the SEVEN SEALS OF JUDGMENT, and the SEVEN TRUMPETS OF WAR, and the SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH. The SEVEN SEALS in Chapter 6 would refer to the LAMB claiming the inheritance, and the exercising of power in the way of judgment as therein foretold, and this will be within the limit of God's permission.

Passing over Chapter 7 which is parenthetical we come to the SEVENTH SEAL in Chapter 8 and the opening of this seal is remarkable, introducing SEVEN ANGELS.

#### Notice—

I. SILENCE. Judgment on earth is under consideration, and because of it there is suspense in HEAVEN as all there await the ACT of execution. It would seem that the present day upheavals in the affairs of life in every aspect can only

terminate in this act of judgment at the hand of GOD, and that because of man's rejection of deliverance offered to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. SEVEN ANGELS. They are in a very honoured position, for they would not appear to be redeemed souls but some who are subject to the rule of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is true, of course, that the Saints will share in the execution of this judgment (1 Cor. 6. 2).

III. TRUMPETS. In the days of Israel trumpets were used to call to battle, and their introduction here might suggest the call to the battle of the great day of Almighty God.

IV. ANOTHER ANGEL. V. 3. I will suggest to you that this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ HIMSELF, for He will stand before the altar that He might present the prayers of SAINTS. We think of all the suffering saints on earth, yea of the many thousands of Jews in the great European struggle apart from other times in their history, and how many cries have ascended to God, and the final presentation of them all appears to be here when God will answer them all in the form of judgment on the earth.

V. PRAYER will be answered, therefore we should take a lesson from this and keep on praying. Do not give in or give up.

VI. FIRST ANGEL. V. 7. Judgment begins. Hail fire mingled with blood. If any are inclined to think that it will not be real—or that it is figurative let them read Exodus, Chapter 9, verse 23 to 28. When in Egypt hail and fire smote herb, man and beast and tree, for this is certainly a type of greater judgment which will transpire in the future. But there was one place in the Old Testament days where the judgment did not fall and that was in the land of Goshen—that was free—for the children of Israel were there—this indicating that the saints of today Redeemed by the Blood of Christ—will not suffer in the future judgment on EARTH.

VII. SECOND ANGEL. A great mountain burning with fire is cast into the Sea and a third part becomes blood and a third part of the creatures die, and a third part of ships are destroyed. Think of the present shipbuilding operations in the world, and what a devastating blow this will be to them. How this will be brought about we do not know, but we know such a thing has taken place on a small scale. I remember a mountain—or a portion of one—at LOEN in Norway falling into the fjord in 1936, and the water rose

200 ft. and swept away a large number of people and this happened a week after we had given the Gospel to the people in Loen.

VIII. THIRD ANGEL. V. 10. Here we have what appears to be some reference to the idea of atom bomb—or God's answer thereto. Notice—

(1) "as it were a lamp" can be read METEOR-TORCH. It has been established that there is in the universe radio-activity, and this touches everything and appears to touch everybody as well. Mankind has found out some of these secrets. One has been the use of natural uranium, and to be brief this has been stripped of its negative power, and then passed through a magnetic field to produce the devastating destructive bomb. Therefore it is an easy procedure for God to call such power into activity from the universe.

(2) Because of man's sin and departure from HIMSELF it appears that God has reserved this power—or that He will use this power HIMSELF in a coming day, and it is quite within the bounds of possibility that Satan is trying or will further try to anticipate what God Himself will do.

(3) But the blazing torch mentioned in Rev. 8 is called "WORMWOOD", which is capable of bringing about convulsion and a paralysis which ends in death, for it will touch three vital parts of mankind—first their food, and then their drink, and the transport of things, and if we knew all that there is to be known in scientific investigation on this line we might find that a move is being made in the direction of poison from bombs, yea even today as I write this there is a statement in the Press stating that Medical Research Council Doctors have found that minute quantities of powder used in fluorescent light tubes can be poisonous to some people, and we are told that this beryllium poisoning has caused many deaths among atom workers in Canada and the United States.

(4) The conclusion one can reach is that God will not allow man to use this for the destruction of mankind, but that with man's rejection of Christ God will use it in the form of judgment on the earth.

IX. FOURTH ANGEL. V. 12, effects the illumination.

Chap. 9. v. 1. The FIFTH ANGEL sounded when we are taken behind earthly scenes, and are given a glimpse of the underworld where Satan and his hosts are, and learn that

they are to be let loose on earth, and at this point we see that one woe is past, and in verse 14 we are transported to the Euphrates, one of the four rivers mentioned in Gen. 2. 14, the scene of the first sin on earth by man, and here 4 angels are loosed, bringing together an army of 200,000,000 (as the Sixth Angel sounds) and we are informed of the great onslaught that is to be made on mankind because they do not repent, v. 21.

Passing over Chapter 10 to Chapter 11 where in verse 14 we learn that the second woe is past, and the third cometh quickly and thereupon we are told of the Seventh Angel sounding but this must not be looked upon as the "last trump" mentioned in 1 Cor. 15. 51 but as the seventh of this particular series, and it is not referred to as the last.

This angel announces—

1. That Christ is about to reign.
2. That the 24 elders are already in their places.
3. The nations are angry.

4. Thy wrath is come, and in verse 18 we are taken forward to the finishing of things on earth as they are at present operating. Then from verse 19 of this Chapter you have a further outline which goes on until Chap. 20. 14, this being co-terminus with Chap. 11. v. 18. A further statement of God's dealing with this wicked world and the unfolding of His Wrath is indicated in Chapters 15 and 16—forming one section. In addition to the sign given in Chapter 12 there is another sign in Chapter 15. First we see the sunclad woman, secondly the red dragon, and thirdly the seven angels having the seven last plagues in which is completed the wrath of God, and you will observe that the *first angel* (Chap. 16. 1) will bring a grievous sore upon men who will have the mark of the beast—the political head of the Gentile Empire. It probably will resemble the ulcers in the Egyptian plagues, but be more intense, and this will be for those who have cast off the worship of God for the worship of the Beast.

The *second angel* causes the sea to become blood, verse 3. In Chapter 8. 8, only one third of the sea is affected, but here the whole sea is touched resulting in all life in the sea being affected.

The *third angel* sounds, and as in Egypt in the days of Moses "all waters that were in the rivers were turned to blood

and the fish that were in the river of Egypt died (Ex. 7. 19, 20) so now the rivers and the fountains of waters in more than one land are affected. The angel who has the administration of this plague appears to be surprised at the greatness of the affliction, but those who suffer will merit it, for they have shed the blood of saints. Now their only drink is blood.

The *fourth angel* caused the heat of the sun to so act that it will scorch mankind with fire. Moses and Malachi have prophesied of a day which would burn as an oven (Deut. 32. 24 and Mal. 4. 1). The Sun of Righteousness brings healing in His Wings, but disaster to those on earth who do not repent of their sins.

The *fifth angel* calls for judgment on the throne of the beast—the Gentile Head—Darkness will cover the earth (Isa. 60. 2; Joel 2. 1, 2, 31) for the sun will be turned into darkness with consequent miseries for those who feel it, for they will bite their tongues by reason of the distress. The darkness may be literal as well as symbolic and this darkness on the kingdom of the Beast will bring awful distress. Earth will become like Hell for wickedness, and darkness and torment.

The *sixth angel* causes the Euphrates to dry up, and then three demon spirits—the trinity of evil—out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, go out to gather people to the battle of the great day of Almighty God.

The *seventh angel* sounds and does his work in the air, and declares "it is done", the end has been reached. When Christ died on the cross He said "It is finished"—or "ful-filled" for Salvation but this statement by the angel announces the completion of judgment.

There will be atmospheric commotions, and on earth such as to shake it terribly. The great City will be divided into three parts, and Babylon the Great will be remembered and made to drink the most bitter draught of all. It will be a

"DAY OF ANGER, DAY OF WONDER

WHEN THE EARTH IS RENT ASUNDER,

SMITTEN WITH HAIL AND FIRE AND THUNDER."

The effect upon the people will be that not one of them having the mark of the beast will seek forgiveness and repent, but they will blaspheme God on account of the plague.

Let us be warned, for we can be sure that God will do what He has predicted. Now is the Day of Salvation and there is security to be found in the LAMB, but in the future it will be the WRATH OF THE LAMB.

This time of the Great Tribulation will be brought to an end by the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to set up His Kingdom for 1,000 years—therefore we pray “even so come, Lord Jesus” for the Church of God complete will meet the Lord in the air before these great and terrible days commence.

So let us look up, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.