

GOD'S PROPHECIES

FOR

PLAIN PEOPLE

by William L. Pettingill

- 1923 -

Van Kampen Press Wheaton, Illinois

Chapter Ten -

CHRIST's Earth-Convulsing Return

Eternal review is the price of knowledge.

It would not be desirable, even if it were possible, in a series of studies such as this, to avoid overlapping. We must go over the same ground frequently. The great events connected with the End of the Age cannot be entirely separated in our minds, and they are not entirely separated in Scripture. The Great Tribulation, for example, leads up to, and even includes Armageddon; and Armageddon culminates in CHRIST's Earth-Convulsing Return. All this is as it should be: we shall lose nothing, but gain much, by this overlapping.

As we closed our study of Armageddon we were looking upon the majestic scenes of the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation. In verses eleven to sixteen of that chapter the LORD JESUS CHRIST is seen, as He is leaving Heaven, with His saints and angels, for the purpose of destroying His enemies and setting up the Kingdom of Heaven on the Earth:

"And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
(Revelation 19:11-16)

That "Rod of Iron" Reign

Some of the language in this paragraph reminds us at once of the Second Psalm, where it is said of the Son of GOD:

"I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I

begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:7-9).

The person in the Psalm is also seen in Revelation 12:5, coming forth out of Israel, **"a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."**

As He comes out of Heaven at the head of His armies, He brings with Him His co-rulers, in fulfillment of the promise of Revelation 2:26, 27:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

In many Scriptures the glorious Return of our LORD is referred to in glowing terms; and sometimes it is dwelt upon in detail. In the present study we shall look at some of these passages.

Let us begin with the Fiftieth Psalm:

"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah" (Psalm 50:1-6).

"What a gathering that will be!" He calls them from the Heavens and from the Earth, even all His saints; those that have made a covenant with Him by sacrifice. This will be **"when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"** (II Thessalonians 1:10). When He Who is their life shall appear, then shall they **"also appear with him in glory"** (Colossians 3:4).

The vision given to Daniel, and recorded by him in his seventh chapter, has this striking language:

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. . . . I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole Heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:9-27).

The prophet Zechariah is GOD's mouthpiece for many messages concerning the coming glory. I quote once only from him in the present study - verses 10-13 of the second chapter:

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

Will the World Welcome Him?

It is not a converted world that will greet the LORD JESUS at His Second Coming. His own words, recorded in the synoptic Gospels, show that the world will not be glad to see Him. Let us look again at His Olivet Discourse:

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27-39).

See also Luke 17,

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-30).

and then this:

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27).

The **"Day of the Lord"** is introduced by "CHRIST's Earth-Convulsing Return." The Day of the LORD, or of JEHOVAH, is a lengthened period beginning with the Second Coming of CHRIST to the Earth and going on through the Millennium itself, finally culminating in the Day of GOD at the close of the Kingdom age. It is very frequently referred to by the Prophets, and sometimes called merely "that day," or "the great day." We are now living in man's day will be succeeded by the Day of the LORD, which

"For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isaiah 2:12-21).

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of Heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (Isaiah 13:9-13).

"Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel 1:15).

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos 5:18-20).

And so on.

We have already looked several times on that very important section of Scripture including the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapter of Zechariah, and in it we have seen that it is the Day of the LORD that terminates the Great Tribulation, the Battle of Armageddon, and the Times of the Gentiles, and brings in the Second Advent of the MESSIAH in connection with the great siege of Jerusalem by the armies of all nations. See especially Zechariah 14:

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14:1-3).

It is here that we see the Mount of Olives dividing under Messiah's feet and the land in the vicinity of Jerusalem reduced to a plain.

"All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zechariah 14:10, 11).

Jerusalem is not a seaport, and it is an unheard of thing for an interior city to become a great metropolis. Jerusalem must be made a seaport, for Jerusalem is to be the political, and commercial, and religious capital and center of the universal Empire. That will be the time when **"the Lord shall be King over all the Earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one"** (Zechariah 14:9).

How Jerusalem is to Become a Seaport!

The great physical changes which will be wrought in the region surrounding Jerusalem will make that city a seaport, with an immense harbor connecting the city with the Mediterranean sea. The great and mysterious basin of the Dead Sea will be filled up to constitute a part of that harbor. The Dead Sea is now over one thousand two hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean, though it is only fifty miles distant from it. Jerusalem is between the two bodies of water:

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, (that is, the sea before, or in front of, the city, meaning the Mediterranean Sea) and half of them toward the hinder sea: (that is, the sea behind the city, meaning the Dead Sea) in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zechariah 14:8).

This mighty river is described in much detail in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel:

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood

toward the east, (1) and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, (2) and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.

And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; (3) they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt" (Ezekiel 47:1-11).

(1) *The "house" in this Scripture is the Millennial Temple. It will face the east, looking toward the present location of "the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" This mount will be split in two in order to make room for the great river to spring forth from Jerusalem as the result of the great topographical changes to accompany CHRIST's Earth-Convulsing Return.*

(2) *I am not unaware of the general "spiritualizing" of this passage, but all such efforts fail to throw light upon it. We are here looking upon a real river that shall one day flow out from Jerusalem, the mightiest river the world has ever known, upon a real river that the world has ever known, upon whose bosom the combined fleets of all nations may ride in safety. Counting 18 inches to the cubit, Ezekiel and his Heavenly guide waded over a mile into the river before reaching water too deep for wading, and then found "**waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.**" This will serve to show what a tremendous body of water this river will be.*

(3) *These are points on the opposite side of the Dead Sea.*

From all of which it is plain that the Dead Sea basin is to become a great landlocked harbor, connected with the Mediterranean Sea by a great river springing forth from Jerusalem, in the day when Jerusalem shall be the City of the Great King, the joy of the whole Earth. The Dead Sea is now indeed a place of death, but in the coming day it will be a place of life, for its waters shall

be healed by the waters from the river.

"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezekiel 47:12).

There is great similarity between the restored Earthly Jerusalem and the Heavenly Jerusalem, the house of the bride, the Lamb's wife. The Earthly city is made after the Heavenly pattern. Revelation 22:1, 2 also tells of a **"pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."** Yet the two cities are not identical.

The city described in Ezekiel is the Earthly Jerusalem as she shall appear when the throne of David is re-established there and occupied by the promised Heir, the Son of GOD, **"Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen"** (I Timothy 6:15, 16).

"Our GOD shall come."

We may hold to that, and depend upon that, and rest in that, for **"the mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken."** Therefore, **"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice. Before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth"** (Psalm 96:11-13).

~ end of chapter 10 ~
