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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in red text.

(Hyperlinks are surrounded by parenthesis and are underlined.)

No one fully understands the width and length and depth and height of God's love towards us. It is because of His love that we are drawn towards Him, and it is because of His grace we are able to receive eternal forgiveness for our sins by believing in the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ. However, we are at the threshold of the last days—as the world is prepared for the return of Jesus, and the end of (God's New Covenant). For throughout time:

- God has sought those who desire Him and His righteousness (Proverbs 8:17).
- Man has rejected God because of their preference for sin (John 3:19-21).
- God has provided warnings prior to delivering His wrath against man's wickedness (Amos 3:7). He warned:
  - o Noah of His intent to destroy all living upon earth (Genesis 6).
  - o Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction (Genesis 19).
  - o Israel to repent or suffer destruction and captivity (2 Kings 17:7-23, Jeremiah 7).
  - What will occur during the last days when His wrath is poured out upon earth (<u>Isaiah 13</u>).

God is "Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

"As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!" Ezekiel 33:11

Because of God's desire for man to repent and turn to Him, God will use unprecedented events during the last days to reach the hearts of the lost and save as many as possible from perishing in the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). For God said, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved." Joel 2:30-32

Prior to the return of Jesus Christ (to destroy wickedness and begin His millennial reign upon earth), God will use unprecedented heavenly signs and wonders during the last days (7-year Tribulation). In addition, God will send messengers who will prophecy, declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reveal that each must make an eternal decision between 2 last day choices, and will explain the temporary and eternal outcomes for of each choice.

| 2 Last Day Choices                           | Temporary Outcome      | Eternal Outcome |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|
| Believe in Jesus and reject the beast's mark | Survivalistic hardship | Heaven          |
| Believe in the beast and accept his mark     | Able to buy and sell   | Lake of fire    |

God will make sure the light of Jesus will increasingly shine brighter as the world succumbs to darkness. He will use the demonstration of signs and wonders to verify the authenticity of His word, His promises, and His messengers.

- These will be perilous times for those who believe in Jesus and reject the beast and his mark. Believers will greatly benefit from unprecedented spiritual events that will reinforce their faith in God.
- Those who believe in the beast and accept his mark will not be able to say during the Great White Throne
  Judgment (<u>Rev. 20:11-15</u>)... "I never heard about Jesus!" Plus, the memory of their decision to reject Jesus
  will haunt them for eternity—where there will be "Wailing and gnashing of teeth." (<u>Matthew 13:49-50</u>).

Because of man's sinful nature and a misdirected understanding of God's truths (because of a willing influence of Satan's delusional lies), it sometimes requires a "shocking event" to reach the hearts and minds of non-believers. Even though many perceive things upon earth "just don't seem right," they will usually repress biblical truths that reveal the last days are upon us. Therefore, to reach those who are skeptical and unconvinced, God will use unprecedented miraculous signs and wonders to (1) shock them to focus their attention and listen to His messengers (below), and (2) provide validation that each messenger is speaking God's truths.

- God's 2 Witnesses
- The Proclamation of 3 Angels
- Believers in Jesus Christ

Note: The Bible declares every nation, tribe, tongue and people on earth will see the deaths of God's 2 witnesses and the heavenly proclamations from the 3 angels. This was improbable when the Bible was written. However, global viewing is possible today due to the advancements and proliferation of video capture technology—combined with distribution of live and recorded video via the Internet—which can instantaneously reach across the globe.

In addition, because the Bible does not specifically define how each angel will proclaim their message, there are different ideas as to how this will occur. However, it is possible (given today's technology) that each of the three angels may only need to appear once to make their declarations—all captured by cell phone videos for immediate global transmission via the Internet—which will be more than sufficient to distribute the visual images of God's 3 angels for all to see, and their audible messages for all to hear.

God will make sure His truths are brightly illuminated and communicated in the midst of ever-increasing darkness. For example, consider the discussions that will occur in news outlets, on social media, and person-to-person due to these shocking events. Whatever is considered important "news" at that time will become insignificant because of God's unprecedented events. However, be assured, Satan and his minions will do everything possible to misdirect the masses by declaring lies—which will be targeted at non-believers and those who have not made a decision for Jesus over the beast—because rejection of truth requires delusional justifications that are based upon lies.

## God's 2 Witnesses

(<u>Revelation 11:3-13</u>) reveals God's two witnesses will prophesy (declare what will happen in the future) upon earth, and will have power to perform miraculous demonstrations of power for a period of 3½ years (as a means to validate their divine appointment by God). After their prescribed time upon earth is completed, they will be killed by the beast, and their bodies will be seen lying dead on the street by all upon earth for 3½ days. But God's 2 witnesses will rise from their death and stand on their feet. God will then call them, and all will hear His calling and will witness their ascension into heaven to their amazement and fear.

God's word states this event will occur during the last days, and His word is very clear about the specifics. As such, consider how this event will strengthen the faith of believers, and cause dire remorse and gut-wrenching pain within those who rejected Jesus. Also consider the means and messaging Satan will use to misdirect from the reality of what just occurred—to reinforce the delusional mindsets of those who are deceived—all driven by Satan's desire to destroy the unfaithful and murder the faithful.

"He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Revelation 13:13-17

## The Proclamations of Three Angels

1st Angel: "Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Revelation 14:6-7

The words "flying in the midst of heaven" and "saying with a loud voice," reveals this angel (and the two that follow) are able to communicate to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people. The angel preaches (to proclaim, declare, and announce) the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The angel will make sure all living upon earth will understand God's offer of salvation (eternal forgiveness of their sins) through faith in the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

The beast will use fear to darken and motivate hearts, souls and minds—which is why the angel will declare to fear God and His pending judgment. Jesus explained, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28

**2<sup>nd</sup> Angel**: "And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 14:8

The Bible provides indicators (but no absolutes) regarding the identity of Babylon in Revelation. As such, there are different views as to who Babylon is (or will be). At this stage in time the identity of Babylon is a mystery—which is reinforced by Revelation 17:5-6: "And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement."

However, the identity of Babylon will become evident because "she" will be used by Satan to spread delusional lies that justify attacking and killing those who believe in Jesus. However, all will witness Babylon's demise.

**3rd Angel:** "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." Revelation 14:9-11

(<u>Revelation 13:11-18</u>) reveals Satan will mandate receiving the beast's mark to buy or sell anything. As such, the declaration by the 3<sup>rd</sup> angel depicts the eternal torment that will be experienced by those who accept the mark—which "crystalizes" the two decisions each person must make: Believe in Jesus and reject the beast and his mark; or believe in the beast, accept his mark and reject Jesus.

## **Believers in Jesus Christ**

Christians living during the last days will witness the unprecedented ways God will seek to save every potential soul, as He magnifies the power of His Holy Spirit within those who serve Him.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy." Acts 2:17-18

A new level of boldness will occur within believers to reach the lost. Their boldness will be magnified by God's 2 witnesses, the angelic proclamations, the realization they are seeing the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, and the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. Here is insight as to the multitudes who will be saved during the last days.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm

branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen. Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?' And I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' So he said to me, 'These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'" Revelation 7:9-17

Note the elder's explanation that those who came out of the great tribulation washed their robes (are free from sin) due to their faith in Jesus, and His blood that He shed for us. Also note the elder's reference to their prior hunger, thirst, heat from the sun, and tears (possibly due to the lack of food, clothing, and shelter)—which conveys they experienced a very difficult time for their faith.

The following scriptures provides additional insight into the challenges that will be experienced by the faithful—including martyrdom. For Satan will instill hatred in the hearts of those who reject Jesus—hatred that is targeted towards those who are redeemed by the Lamb. This is the same type of delusional hatred that existed within the heart of Hitler and his Nazis—who murdered more than six million Jews in WW2—all because of Satan's influence.

"When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed." Revelation 6:9-11

Note how God comforts those who had died for their faith, and asks them to be patient until the final number of those who will also be killed for their faith and will enter into Heaven (as they have) is completed.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" Revelation 14:12-13

Be assured God has a plan of retribution. In addition to the earthly devastation that will occur via the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls (Rev. chapters 6-10 and 16), God will deliver personalized painful torment to those who reject His Son—and especially those who shed the blood of His saints and prophets—all as a prelude to their final judgement in the lake of fire. For God will:

- Cause loathsome sores upon those who have the beast's mark and worship the beast. (Rev. 16:2)
- Cause them to drink blood. (Rev. 16:3-6)
  - o The sea will become as blood.
  - o The rivers and springs of water will become blood.
- Cause the sun to scorch them with fire. (Rev. 16:8-9)
- Cause them extreme anguish because of their pain and their sores. (Rev. 16:10-11)
- Cause them to want to die but are unable. (Rev. 9:1-6)

Satan will harden their hearts to the point where they will curse God and not accept repentant responsibility—because they believed and internalized Satan's lies and delusional justifications for what they have done.

## The Beast, the False Prophet, and the Mark of the Beast = Fulfilled Prophecy

"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

The manifestation of fulfilled biblical prophecy will also serve as a message from God to believers in that it proves His word is accurate and true. Those who reject the beast will know last day prophecies; they will recognize what's going on; and their faith will be continually strengthened as God's warnings of last day events becomes reality. In addition, because of the unprecedented events that are occurring before their eyes, God's faithful will witness to non-believers by comparing biblical prophecy against the reality of what's occurring in the world.

Jesus provided us with prophetic insight into what will occur before He returns. "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth." Luke 21:25-28, 34-35

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." John 14:1-4



In summary, God will seek to save as many as possible during the last days via unprecedented means—for He will:

- Use signs and wonders.
- Empower His 2 witnesses for 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3-13)—for the world will:
  - Hear their prophesies and will see the use of their God-given power.
  - See their deaths and will rejoice for 3½ days as they lie in the streets.
  - Hear the voice of God calling them into heaven and will be astonished as they witness their ascension.
  - Within an hour they will experience a destructive earthquake that will cause 7,000 people to die.
  - Realize everything they declared is true.
- Empower angels to globally proclaim the gospel, Babylon's demise, and consequences of rejecting His Son.
- Pour out His spirit upon Christians who will boldly declare His truths.
- Bring all prophetic truths into fruition.

I pray this lesson magnifies your motivation to prepare for the perilous times that are ahead. Jesus declared, "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." Luke 21:36

Click (here) to listen to a wonderful song by Keith Green. You will be blessed.

Give glory, and honor, and praise to God...for He alone is worthy. Harold D. Thomas