

THE END TIMES

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The Bible identifies the time in which we are living as *this present evil world* and it declares that Satan is *the god of this world*. (Galatians 1:4; 2 Corinthians 4:4) According to Bible chronology, what the world has been experiencing for the past 100 years, especially since the start of World War I, is the great prophetic clash between the kingdoms of this world, with Satan as their ruler, and the kingdom of God, with Christ as His appointed reigning King. These two worlds are at war, and there will never be peace as long as Satan and his followers are permitted to influence and test mankind. Soon *the prince of peace*, Jehovah's *right arm*, will take full control, and Satan will be bound. (Revelation 20:1-3) But, at this end time of *the present evil world*, Christ starts to take control of the affairs of earth and is tearing down this old order—the financial, social, civil and religious powers which have been corrupted by evil influences.

A fitting illustration of this tearing down process is evident today in the conflict with Iraq. To replace the tyrannical regime with a new democratic order is proving to be a long, complex task. Frequent flares of tension have arisen as rival, would-be leaders—each with his own agenda—struggle for the chief position of power. In addition, anarchy, fueled by confusion, resentment and distrust has erupted from the conflict. The difference between the scenario being played out in Iraq and that of Christ's incoming kingdom is that, at best, a new Iraqi government will be but a temporary remedy for a far greater problem, whereas, Christ's kingdom will bring *lasting* liberty and justice for all. (Watch for the next issue of *The End Times: With Liberty and Justice for All.*)

Why are the Nations Angry?

The theme text states that, at this time when Christ is beginning to take control of earth's affairs, the nations will be angry. The Psalmist states the question: "*Why are the nations in an uproar? . . . the rulers take counsel together against the LORD* [Jehovah]

and His anointed [Christ and his church]." Psalms 2:1-2 NAS

The answer is that the nations of the world make up *the kingdoms of this world* which belong to their god Satan. ". . . *the god of this world hath blinded the minds* [fueling the confusion] *of them which believe not . . .*" (2 Corinthians 4:4)



"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever . . . And the nations were angry . . ." — Revelation 11:15, 18

Satan is not pleased that *his evil kingdom* is being invaded. And the selfish, greedy nations who serve Satan are likewise not interested in surrendering without a fight. What does Jesus do when he is installed as a king and given the nations for his inheritance? (Psalms 2:6-9) They are broken *with a rod of iron*—that is, he uses his authority to overturn their kingdoms, that he might build upon a cleansed foundation. Ezekiel 21:26, 27

Daniel prophesied that when Jesus Christ exercises his authority as king, the first effect *will not* be peace. "*At that time shall Michael*

stand up . . . and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation . . ." (Daniel 12:1) God's anointed Son is *Michael*, meaning *who as God*. How appropriate, because it is Christ ruling for God when he stands up. *Stand up*, as identified in the Book of Daniel, means to rule, as is seen in Daniel 11:3: "*And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion . . .*"

Unprecedented World Upheaval

A marked feature of the initial phase of Christ's reign is that the trouble will be globally unprecedented—*trouble such as never was*. Christ could inaugurate his peaceable kingdom immediately, but then the people of earth would not understand the need for his rule of righteousness. They need to manifest their own character and reach exasperation with their own futile attempts at peace. The nations most in harmony with God's principles will have less of a struggle accepting the new arrangement than the more tyrannical, oppressive nations. But, mankind must learn that all governments, even the most

democratic, fall far short of the perfect righteousness to be achieved in Christ's peaceable kingdom. This, therefore, is the purpose of *the time of trouble such as never was*.

The setting up of Christ's righteous kingdom has been a painful process for the world. World War I, a turning point in history, was a start in the process of breaking up the kingdoms of earth. This war resulted in the dissolving of the ruling houses of Europe which had endured for centuries. As World War II erupted, more *travail* upon the nations resulted. Out of the ashes of colonialism, more than a hundred new nations sprouted, each demanding its own right to rule. And the nations still war with each other, not yet willing to submit to the Lord's ways. They manifest their selfishness, greed, and aggressiveness in even more threatening ways than ever before—with nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Jesus described our day thus: "*And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity . . . men's hearts failing them for fear . . .*" Luke 21:25, 26

Societies are breaking up within nations, and within these, ethnic groups are demanding rights with dignity and freedom from oppression. The subject of human rights is a global issue. The truth everywhere, on all subjects is being exposed, for when Christ reigns, he wields the *sword of truth*. "*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 . . . on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" (Revelation 19:15-16) It is *truth* and *righteousness* that will ultimately triumph. "*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*" 1 Corinthians 4:5

Nebuchadnezzar's Image: A Prophetic Picture of Our Day

Nebuchadnezzar was the king of ancient Babylon. He had a dream that was very disturbing to him, but he could not recall its content. (Daniel 2:1-48) He ordered his *wise men* to relate the dream to him and explain its meaning. When these could not, he ordered that all the wise men in Babylon be slain. This decree included the prophet Daniel, a Jew who had been taken captive to Babylon. Daniel requested and was granted time to learn of the dream and its meaning. He sought God's help through prayer and in a vision was shown the content of the dream and given its interpretation. The vision revealed a colossal image with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of copper, legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with clay. He explained to the king that each division of the body of this awesome image represented an earthly

empire—each one overturning the other. (Ezekiel 21:27) Starting with the head of gold, which he explained represented King Nebuchadnezzar, the metals became less precious from top to bottom, representing that each government would progressively become inferior. The last civil power, iron, was mixed with clay (church/state amalgamation), rendering it impure, brittle and weak.

The dream continued, showing a stone cut out of the mountain without hands which struck the image at its brittle feet, toppling the mighty structure and grinding it to powder. This stone was a picture of God's kingdom, which would strike the feet—the last remaining governments—and gradually grinds them to pieces. There can be no doubt that Christ, as God's appointed agent, will completely tear down the old order, leaving no corrupting influences, before building up the new.

The next aspect of the dream told of a wind, which blew every bit of the pulverized image away. This process has been painful to the governments in power during the initial phases of Christ's reign, and, of course, they have been enraged to see their strongholds toppling, splitting into smaller nations, being ground down by factions within and fearful of seeing them blown away by the strong winds of anarchy.

Daniel concluded the interpretation of the dream thus: "*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it [God's kingdom] shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms [of this world], and it shall stand for ever.*" (Daniel 2:44) This prophecy describes our day—the overlapping of an old, flawed system with a new, perfect order. Indeed,

God's righteous kingdom, with Christ and his church as His agents, will wipe away all selfishness and corruption, and then shall bring a blessing to all the nations of the earth. (Genesis 22:18) A new kingdom will replace the old, where, as stated in Matthew 6:10: "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

"The Children of Thy People"

The prophet Daniel was used of the Lord to describe another event to occur in *the end times*. Daniel 12:1 states that when Christ stands up to reign over the nations—causing *a time of trouble*—he will also stand for "*the children of thy people*" the natural seed of Abraham, Israel.

Who can deny the incredible phenomenon of the rebirth of a lost nation, whose people have been scattered throughout the world for almost 2,000 years? Indeed, this prophetic fulfillment of the regathering of Jews to their ancient homeland has been an undeniable miracle. (Jeremiah 16:14, 15) Even many Orthodox Jews associate the restoration of Israel with the coming of



Messiah. What is not generally understood, though, is that through His *holy arm*, Jesus Christ, it is God who is ruling over them to bring Israel back to the land. “*As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. And I will bring you out from the people and will gather you out of the countries [of the whole world, not just Babylon] wherein ye are scattered. . .*” (Ezekiel 20:33,34; Isaiah 52:10; 63:5) Note that the gathering process is not gentle, but “*with fury.*”

The word here for *rule* (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, #4427) literally means in Hebrew, *to ascend to the throne*. It is the same word used when all the kings of Israel began their reigns. Just as the kings of Judah sat on the *throne of Jehovah* (1 Chronicles 29:23), so Christ reigns for God when Israel is being gathered and restored. “*O sing unto the LORD a new song, for He hath done marvelous things; His right hand, and His holy arm [Christ] hath gotten him the victory.*” Psalms 98:1

The Jews are being gathered step by step and prepared gradually for their place in the kingdom. This gathering of the nation of Israel is likened in Ezekiel’s prophecy to a great valley of dry bones coming together. (Ezekiel 37:1-14) During this process, Jerusalem is regarded as a *burdensome stone for all people*. (Zechariah 12:3) The nations of the world, as prophesied, are having trouble knowing what to do with Israel.

The nations, in their ignorance, do not see that the break up of all the worldly governments is necessary, and that Jehovah is bringing Israel, His chosen people back into favor. Not seeing this, the nations of earth will turn against Israel. Even Christians have been blinded into thinking that the invasion of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38, 39 will be against Israel as a final chastening for her sins. In reality, though, Jehovah will fight for His people (Israel) as He did in the days of old. (Zechariah 14:1-3) Though Israel has suffered greatly at the hands of cruel nations, God intends a blessing for them and will make “*a full end of all nations [governments] whither I have scattered thee, yet will I [Jehovah] not make a full end of thee [Israel].*” Jeremiah 30:11

Christ Ruling in the Midst of His Enemies

Seeing the prophetic fulfillment in the process of the restoration of Israel, and observing the painful throes of the disintegration of the nations, we recognize that **Christ is taking control**. Christ has always reigned in the hearts of his people—that is where his kingdom started, but now he is beginning to rule over his enemies. “*The LORD [Jehovah] says to my Lord [Jesus]: Sit at My right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet. The LORD [Jehovah] will stretch forth Thy strong scepter [Jesus] from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of*

thine enemies’ . . . The Lord [Jesus Christ] is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations . . .” — Psalms 110:1,2,5,6 NAS

An illustration from the reign of King David demonstrates two phases of Christ’s reign. The total length of David’s reign was forty years, yet he only reigned in Jerusalem, over all of Israel, thirty three years. (2 Samuel 5:4,5) During the first seven years, David reigned from Hebron, where only his *brethren* acknowledged and served him as their king. Christ’s *brethren*, too, will first comprehend that he is reigning even though the rest of the world still honors their earthly rulers.

Those who recognize Christ as the rightful king are encouraged and energized to tell others. “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.*” (Isaiah 52:7) The last *feet members* of Christ’s anointed body announce this coming peace during a tumultuous time of transition. They see his reigning work through the eyes of faith—based upon the Scriptures. 1 Corinthians 12:12

God’s Kingdom in Earth as in Heaven

“*And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain [kingdom] of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and all nations*

shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain [kingdom] of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion [spiritual Israel reigning in heaven] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the resurrected faithful of natural Israel—as God’s earthly representatives].” Isaiah 2:2,3

Once Satan’s kingdom has been removed, the people of the nations will then be humbled, brought to a clear understanding of God’s great plan and will be ready to learn. “*Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord . . . In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.*” Zechariah 8:22,23

This will be the time for the peoples of the nations, once under the dominion of Satan, to turn to their new King, Christ, and be healed. (Revelation 22:1,2) Though the governments, and all institutions—financial, civil, religious and social—of the earth will be dissolved, the people will be brought forth into the kingdom of God, submissive and ready to listen to His beloved Son. Christ will have been victorious in this war of the two worlds, and heaven and earth will coexist in perfect harmony.

