

## Chapter V

### THREE MAJOR PEAKS OF PROPHECY

As we continue in our study of the second coming of our Lord, it is not wise to impose the theories of various schools of thought upon the Scriptures. This is a perilous practice at best and would accomplish little in our total understanding of the truth. Rather we will use an inductive approach to our subject. We will allow the evidence we have gleaned from the Word of God, *rightly divided*, to formulate our position. This will eliminate any need to discuss the theories of postmillennialism and amillennialism.

The best approach to this or any other subject in the Word of God is always to allow the Word of God and the Spirit of God to direct our understanding. If one is well established in the truth, this is the best source to refute any and all of the errors that have arisen or will arise concerning the second coming of our Lord or any other doctrine of the Scriptures.

Our studies of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the seven feasts of the Jews, and the seventy weeks of Daniel have revealed that there are three major mountain peaks of prophecy that are yet

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to be fulfilled at the end of the present church age. These are represented, as we have seen, in the last three feasts of the Jewish year.

The seven feasts of the Jews have established the prophetic order in which the prophecies of the fourth Gentile world empire will be fulfilled. The feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits were fulfilled perfectly (as we have seen) in the first advent of our Lord. The feast of Pentecost is presently being fulfilled by the church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles; and the last three feasts of the Jews reveal the major mountain peaks of prophecy (yet to be fulfilled) for which this chapter is named.

The first of the last three peaks of prophecy is the rapture. We have seen that it was represented in the feast of Trumpets. We have also seen that the Day of Atonement has represented the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth: when our Lord shall stand before the nation of Israel again to bring them salvation. The third and final peak will come fully into view when our Lord establishes His Kingdom upon this earth. This was revealed in the feast of Tabernacles, which, as we have seen, will be observed every year of the millennial reign of Christ.

There are, of course, many more prophecies to be fulfilled, but each of them is associated with the primary prophecies represented by the last three feasts of the Jews. Our Lord called some of these *the beginning of sorrows* (the birth pangs) that shall produce the second coming of our Lord. He spoke of *wars and rumors of wars, of famines, and of pestilences*. He spoke of the fig tree *shooting forth the branch* and of many other things. Each of His prophetic utterances is a part of the overall scheme of things that shall bring about the fulfillment of the last three feasts of the

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Jews.

In fact we began our study of the second coming of our Lord with the observation that the fig tree has budded (according to Matthew 24:32, compared with Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37). We used the reconstitution of Israel as a nation to establish the fact (according to the prophet Hosea) that we are presently in the latter part of the *latter days*.

The manner in which some of the companion prophecies will be fulfilled is more evident than others. Some remain totally veiled in mystery. Over the years of our ministry the Lord has enabled us to understand a great deal, but we certainly make no claim to understand all of the prophecies associated with His coming. No one with spiritual discernment would make such a claim. Even so we know (based upon the fulfillment of the prophecies of the first advent of our Lord) that each of these prophecies will be fulfilled completely and perfectly in the span of the prophetic significance of the last three feasts of the Jews.

It has become a common practice for believers to refer to the first resurrection as the second coming of our Lord. This is entirely understandable (because it is the great hope of the believer), but it is not altogether accurate.

The first resurrection is that aspect of the second coming of our Lord when He comes for His saints. This will be *as a thief in the night*, when He shall come to catch away His jewels unto Himself (Malachi 3:17). Seven years later, at the end of the great tribulation period, He will come again to this earth *with all of his saints*. In the book of the Revelation, John wrote, *Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him...* Paul referred to both of these events in his second epistle to the Thessalonians when he wrote:

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Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (II Thessalonians 2:1-2)

This text speaks of two separate events: *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and *our gathering together unto him*. The coming of our Lord is referred to in Scripture as *the Day of the Lord*. This will be the day when the Lord shall return again to establish His Kingdom upon this earth:

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.

And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. (Zechariah 14:1-9)

The second event mentioned by the apostle Paul is *our gathering together unto him*. This event, according to the vision of the seventy weeks of Daniel, precedes the Day of the Lord by the space of the seventieth week of Daniel's vision -- seven years. Remember the eighth ruler of the fourth world empire (the antichrist) *shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and*

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*in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease* (Daniel 9:27a). This will be the primary sign for the Jews to flee Jerusalem, for our Lord said:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:15-22)

Many professing Christians have been confused by these instructions. They have attempted to apply them to themselves, but these instructions are not for believers in the church age. These instructions are for the nation of Israel. These are instructions for the final week of Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks.

The seventy weeks, according to the angel Gabriel, *are determined upon thy people* (the Jews) *and upon thy holy city* (Jerusalem). Our Lord's instructions were for a people who were under the covenant of the law until the time of their salvation. This was (and still is) Israel. We must not let the believer's relationship to the law confuse the issue. Paul wrote, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone* [whether Jew or Gentile] *that believeth*. The nation of Israel has not yet believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently Israel's covenant of law relationship with God will continue until the time of her salvation.

This does not take place at the time of her flight from Jerusalem (at the midpoint of the tribulation period) when she *shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place* (Matthew 24:15). Israel's salvation will come at the coming of

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the Lord (at the end of the great tribulation), when *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced* (Zechariah 12:10). These facts enable us to understand our Lord's instructions to Israel: *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day....*

As we continue with the text to the Thessalonians, Paul admonished them not to be shaken or troubled by the many false doctrines and counterfeit claims of certain teachers regarding *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. He reminded them that he had taught them the truth concerning the Day of the Lord.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (II Thessalonians 2:3-6)

The Day of the Lord is predicated of two events in Paul's text: *a falling away first, and that man of [the] sin be revealed, the son of [the] perdition....* The falling away first is a translation of the Greek word for apostasy. This is a description of the final stages of the church age. The church will be in a state of apostasy like Israel was at the first advent of our Lord.

The apostle John described the final stages of the church age in his letter to the church at Laodicea, in the book of the Revelation. The Laodicean church age is preparing the world for the revelation of the man of the sin, the antichrist, who will counterfeit the second coming our Lord Jesus Christ. After which, he will make a covenant with Israel for seven years (the final week of the seventy weeks of Daniel's vision).

During the apostasy of the final days of the church age, the true church (along with the saints of all ages) will be called into the presence of our Lord in heaven when the trumpet shall

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sound and our Lord shall say, *Come up hither*. Once the saints (indwelt by the Holy Spirit) are taken out of this world, there will not be a single person left upon the earth who can discern the truth of the Word of God. Then the man of the sin (the antichrist) shall be revealed in a counterfeit return of the Lord.

For the mystery of [the] iniquity doth already work: only he [the Holy Spirit indwelling the true church] who now [restraineth] will [restrain], until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked [the antichrist] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe [the] lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in [the] unrighteousness. (II Thessalonians 2:7-12)

The point of Paul's argument was that these things were not then taking place. So the Day of the Lord could not have already come. Paul reminded them that he had taught them there would be two events that would precede the Day of the Lord -- the apostasy of the church, and the revelation of the man of sin. He reminded them that the man of sin could not be revealed until that which hinders his revelation is taken away. This is *our gathering together unto him*.

It is the church of Jesus Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that prevents the revelation of the antichrist by the proclamation of the truth. As long as the truth of the saving grace of Jesus Christ is still being proclaimed in this world, it is not possible that the Day of the Lord has come. The truth prevents the revelation of the man of sin, but an apostate church aids and abets his revelation, because:

... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto

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us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (I Corinthians 2:9-16)

This text teaches us that believers in Jesus Christ know the things of God because of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God. In this age God no longer speaks directly to man. He speaks to man through the proclamation of the truth by His church, which He commissioned to *Go into all of the world and preach the gospel*. Paul taught the Romans:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:13-15)

These two texts teach us that it is the church, indwelt by the Spirit of God, that proclaims the truth in this world. Our Lord said, *Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*. It is the proclamation of the truth that counteracts the errors of this world's system. If the church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is removed from this world, there will be no one in the world who can counteract or refute the lie of the antichrist when he comes and claims to be the Christ.

At the beginning of the second chapter of second Thessalonians, Paul spoke of two events, *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him*. If the removing of that which hinders (in this chapter) is not the rapture of the church, as those who believe in a mid-

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tribulation rapture claim, then Paul never speaks of *our gathering together unto him* in this chapter. This is not possible. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God...*

The Old and New Testament Scriptures contain vast numbers of prophecies concerning the first and second advents of our Lord. We have seen the prophecies of our Lord's first advent fulfilled completely and perfectly. We know that the second advent of our Lord will also be fulfilled with the same exacting perfection. Nevertheless as we anticipate the fulfillment of the prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled, it is Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel's vision of the seventy-weeks and the seven feasts of the Jews, which constantly direct us in our understanding of that which has not yet been fulfilled.

God's prophetic clock of the seventy weeks of Daniel began the countdown to the Kingdom of God upon this earth when the Persian emperor Cyrus gave the commandment *to restore and to build Jerusalem*. The events of the seven sevens were fulfilled exactly as promised, as was the crucifixion of Christ at the end of the sixty-nine sevens. Then, with the crucifixion of Christ, God's prophetic clock stopped. This could not be seen in the vision of the seventy weeks, but it was anticipated in the feast of Pentecost, between the first three feasts and the last three feasts of the Jewish year.

The seventieth week of Daniel will not begin until the revelation of the antichrist, when he will counterfeit the return of our Lord to this earth. He will then make a covenant with Israel for one week (seven years). It is possible that one of the terms of this covenant will be the rebuilding of the earthly temple in Jerusalem. This act, along with his *signs and lying wonders*, will greatly aid in the deception of the apostate church and the nation of Israel.

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Since the antichrist will be the eighth ruler of the fourth world empire; and since our Lord Jesus Christ will destroy the fourth world empire at His coming; the fourth world empire will cease to exist when our Lord establishes His Kingdom upon this earth, at the end of the seventieth week of Daniel's vision.

Without Nebuchadnezzar's dream of four world empires, the seven feasts of the Jews, and Daniel's vision of seventy weeks, it would be impossible to see the correlation between human history and the first and second advents of our Lord; but with them, we recognize that the first and second advents of our Lord are inexorably linked to the Jews and the city of Jerusalem, within the time frame of the seventy weeks of Daniel's vision.