

## **The last time**

by Douglas E. Cox

In Daniel 12:7, a swearing angel standing upon the waters of a river declared that the period represented by 'a time, times and a half,' in which all Daniel's prophecies would be fulfilled, will continue to the end of the age, when the resurrection described in Daniel 12:1 occurs. "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." [Daniel 12:7] The "holy people" in the prophecy are the saints, as we can see in chapter 7, and in Daniel 12:1. They are those whose names are in the book of life.

A similar swearing angel was described by John in Revelation 10. This person said that when the 7th trumpet sounds, the mystery of God revealed to the prophets will be finished. All prophecies about the present age will be fulfilled. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." [Revelation 10:5-7]

The numbers associated with the 'time, times, and an half,' in Daniel and Revelation, 1,335 days, 1,290 days, 1,260 days, 3.5 days, form a diminishing series, which represents the remaining time of the Church. These expressions are not meant to represent literal days or years, but they are prophetic symbols of the time of the Church remaining after certain events in her history.

The "last time," which is represented by "a time, times and a half," began in the first century. It is the final portion of the 70th week, the first part of which was the ministry of Jesus, three and a half natural years. The "time, times and a half," is a symbolic half-week, the last part of the 70th week.

When the apostle Peter said, "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days," [Acts 3:24] he implied that the last half of the 70th week had begun. Earlier in Jesus' ministry Peter had declared that Jesus was the Christ, and Jesus said this was revealed to him by the Father in heaven. Peter must have understood that Daniel's 70th week had already begun. The prophecy of the 70 weeks said the Messiah would come after the second section of 62 weeks had been completed. The ministry of Jesus was the first part of the 70th week, three and a half natural years. After Jesus was crucified, and ascended to heaven, the last part of the 70th week began. It is the last time period defined in prophecy.

John said many antichrists would characterize the last time. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." [1 John 2:18]

Daniel said the saints would be given into the hand of a "little horn." He wrote: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." [Daniel 7:25]

The "little horn" arose in Roman times and continues to the end of the age. It arose among the ten horns of the fourth beast, which represents the Roman empire. It is distinct from the 10 horns of the beast, and has eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things. Its "eyes like the eyes of a man" depict a human point of view, opposed to the divine. It represents the antichrist spirit.

The little horn tries to "change times and laws." This includes the times of prophecy, and the laws contained in Scripture. Many are influenced by it. One of the horn's attempts to "change times and laws," I think, is the claim that the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy must be detached from the previous two sections of the prophecy, and displaced far into the future, thus generating a portentous gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. Those supporting this monstrous claim say that the 70th week represents a future seven years of tribulation. But that contradicts the words of the apostle John, who said "the last time" had already begun, in the first century. [1 John 2:18] Scripture does not teach that there will be a future seven year tribulation.

The truth is, the 70th week is when Jesus Christ confirms his covenant with many, [Daniel 9:27] which began with his earthly ministry, and continues to the end of the world. The dominion of the little horn over the saints will be consumed and destroyed "unto the end." Daniel wrote, "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." [Daniel 7:26]

John referred to antichrist as a spirit, not a human individual. He wrote: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." [1 John 4:3]

John said those who deny that Jesus is the Christ are antichrist. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." [1 John 2:22]

The apostle Peter said that the prophets ministered "unto us," that is, Christians in the present age, and the Church. And they wrote about the Gospel, "the grace that should come unto you." He wrote: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the

prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." [1 Peter 1:9-12]

At the time of the end, Daniel was informed, his prophecies will be understood, but until then, they are sealed. Daniel was told to seal them. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." [Daniel 12:4]

Only the wise will understand Daniel's prophecies, because their true interpretation must be given to them by Jesus Christ. "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." [Daniel 12:9-10]

When the wise, i.e., when the saints understand prophecy, Jesus Christ is revealed, and glorified in them. Paul wrote: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." [2 Thessalonians 1:7-10]

Jesus said, all the tribes of the earth will mourn. "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." [Matthew 24:30]

Several prophecies indicate that Christians who have turned aside from the truth will return to God in the "latter days." For example, the prophet Hosea said, "afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." [Hosea 3:5] Jesus is the king who reigns forever over the true Israel, on David's throne in the heavenly Jerusalem. He is represented figuratively by David in Hosea's prophecy.

The prophet Joel said, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth out of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." [Joel 3:18]

The mountains that drop new wine depict the discovery of fresh, new interpretations of prophecy. Jesus compared his teachings to "new wine." [Matthew 9:17]

Shittim was the place where the Israelites camped, before entering the promised land, and it was where they committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab. The fountain flowing from the house of the Lord depicts the spirit of God, and the truth of the Gospel, which provides a cure for spiritual whoredom.

The apostle Peter said judgment begins with the house of God, the Church. "For the time is come

that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" [1 Peter 4:16-18]

When the 7th trumpet sounds, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." [Revelation 11:15]

Paul said the world will be judged by Jesus. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." [Acts 17:30-31]

God judges the world with righteousness, and truth. The psalmist wrote: "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 96:12-13]

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" [1 Corinthians 6:2]

Some of Daniel's visions are to be understood at "the "time of the end." "So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision." [Daniel 8:17]

Jesus warned, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." [Luke 21:32-36]

Jesus remains alive, so his generation has not passed away, it is a unique generation, which will not pass away because Jesus reigns forever in the throne of David, over all Israel.