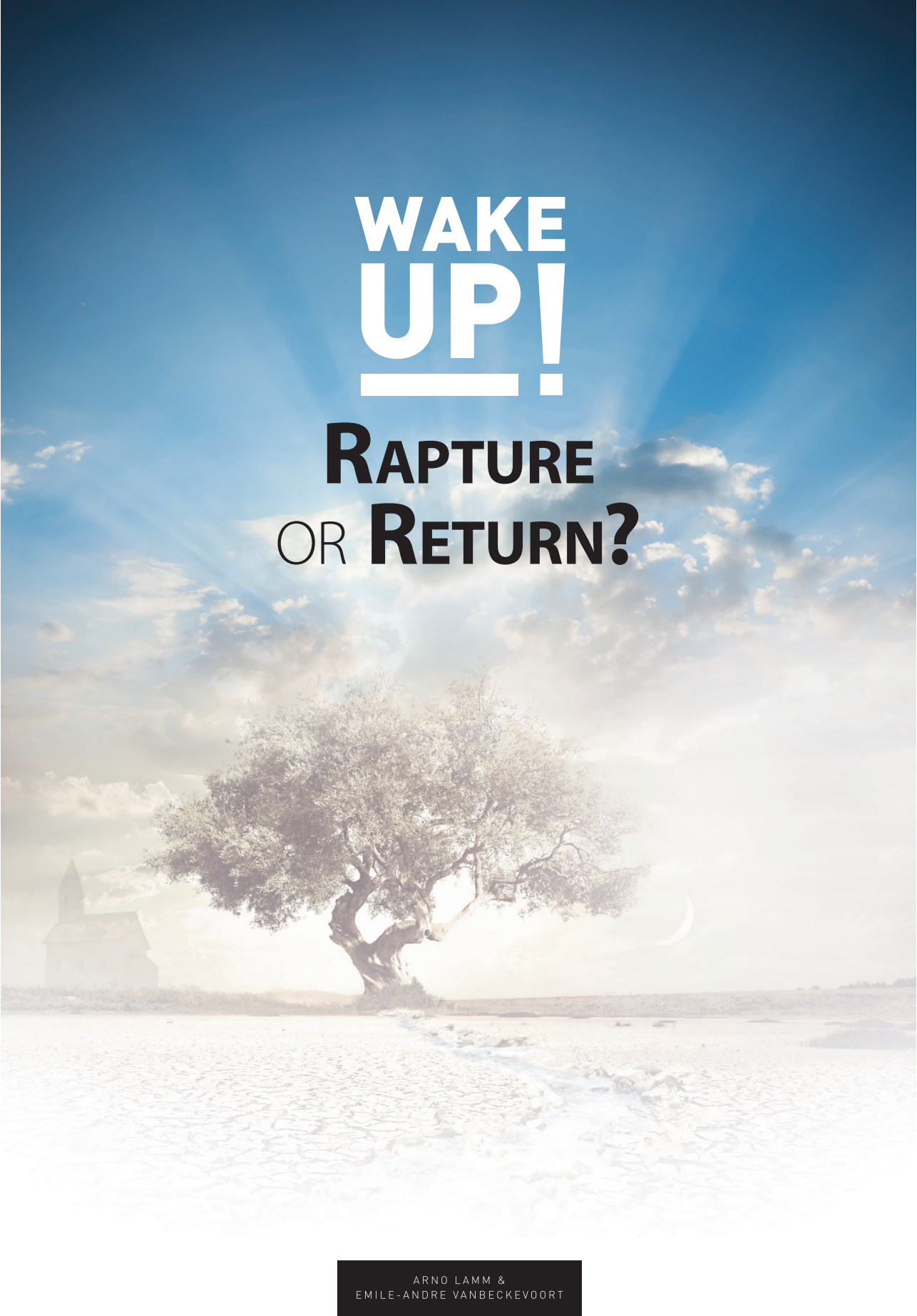




WAKE UP!

RAPTURE OR RETURN?

ARNO LAMM &
EMILE-ANDRE VANBECKEVOORT

Rapture or Return?

**WAKE
UP!**

March 2017

Free addition to Wake-Up!

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Typesetting: TM Graphics

An addition to *Wake Up!* - ISBN 9789064512384

This additional E-book is free and goes with the *Wake Up!* book

The authors have chosen to make this addition available on the internet simply to keep the size of the physical book in check. This addition discusses the following subjects in greater depth: The Return of the Messiah and the taking away of the Bride of Christ, and why these two events are not one and the same.

We advise you to read this e-book **after** reading the main text of *Wake Up!* Reading in this order will enable you to study and understand the topics from a correct perspective. The main book shows the time patterns, cycles, shadows, and Biblical feasts given by God as a guideline for His Calendar. For it was God who appointed the Times and He makes this clear throughout the Bible. A few of the Old Testament shadows point specifically to the taking away of the Bride of Christ and the Return of Jesus Christ as the King of kings. These events can be understood in a deeper and more accurate way when placed in the light of these patterns.

At the same time, this additional E-book explores the end times more in depth. You will be able to better understand certain events which await the Church of Jesus Christ as well as what will take place on Earth during this last period before the Return of the Messiah.

We also briefly discuss different theories and identify which one we see as Biblical truth. These conclusions are based on the explorations and research done and discussed in the main book. We have examined the connections among the multiple and fundamental truths within the various patterns.

In this e-book, because of the growing presence and influence of Islam, we also briefly look at this religion and some of the ways its theologies relate and/or deviate from what we believe the Bible teaches with regard to the end times. We consider the impact on the thought patterns of the Christian churches of the 21st century.

February 2017

**"If the Bible is simply a book of myths,
fairy tales and stories, then it is disturbingly accurate
in what we see unfolding in our current world climate."**

PETER HERBERT

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RAPTURE OR RETURN?



Introduction

Christians often say that they look forward to the Second Coming of the Messiah. When Christ returns, a time of peace on earth will begin and those who believe in Him will be with Him forever. Many believe that they will see Jesus Christ descend on the Mount of Olives and that believers will live on earth at that time. Others look forward to the Rapture of the Church, an event that will take place before a period of great tribulation on the earth as described in the Book of Revelation. After that period of tribulation, Jesus will come back to earth with His Spiritual Bride. At first glance, these two beliefs don't seem to align. This is why our e-book focuses on the biblical basis regarding the Second Coming of Christ and what will happen with the Bride of Christ. If we can focus on what God's program is for the end times, we will live more watchful lives, able to concentrate on what is to come. After all, the Bible explicitly commands us to be very vigilant¹.

The End Times in Short

The Book of Revelation and Jesus' sermon about the last days, in conjunction with the books of the Prophets from the Old Covenant, give a vivid picture about the "last days" of our current era. In the first chapters of the Wake-Up book, we've already established that almost all the Bible books of the Old Testament contain shadows of future events, of which a number have already become reality. Whoever has read those chapters understands that the end times consist of a long start-up period that eventually flows into the period of the Great Tribulation, followed by the start of the Millennium. In that start-up period, which in fact lasted many centuries already, God has been preparing and still is preparing the global Bride, consisting of many generations, to meet the Bridegroom. We now approach a period in human history that will increasingly reveal what was hidden during the previous centuries. However, it is also a time in which the filthiness and darkness in the world will reach an alarming climax. The Bible describes that during these times, Satan will, more than ever, roam the earth like a roaring lion to see who he can still devour. At this point, he knows that his remaining time is very short². At the same time, the Bible tells us that God Himself will shake the nations because of their lawlessness and rebellion³. It is a time that will be reminiscent of Egypt, where the plagues were needed to convince Pharaoh to release the Hebrew people. The contemporary Pharaoh of this world will not be inclined to give up his acclaimed world power without massive and worldwide seduction and confrontation.

¹ See Matt. 24:42,44 & 25:13. Mark 13:35,37. Luke 21:36 and Rev. 16:15

² 1 Pet. 5:8. See also the actions of the dragon in Rev. 1.

³ See Haggai ch.1 and 2

To remain spiritually awake and remain standing in this current period, it is important for Christians to recognize what is actually happening. Further, it is also vital to know where the deception, wars, diseases, earthquakes, and natural disasters will be coming from. First, before the period of the Seven Years of Tribulation, there has been and still is a very long period time, referred to as the “last days.” The Bible tells us about “labor pains” that will become increasingly more intense and frequent. At the end of the period of the Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to the earth. Then, after a short war with Satan, the Millennium of Peace will begin. During the 1000 years that follow, Satan will be locked up so he will no longer be able to seduce the Nations.¹

There’s no doubt that this Millennium will last 1000 actual years. This period of 1000 years fits exactly after a block of time of 6000 years since the creation in Genesis. At the start of the Millennium these 6000 years will be behind us. It’s like when God created our world in 6 days, as is described in Genesis, and then He rested on the 7th day. The Bible doesn’t tell us how long the earth was empty and void before that. Although God doesn’t *need* rest, this rest on the 7th day was already a shadow image of the 1000 Year Millennium and a referral to the total amount of time that the earth will have existed in its present form. The main book, Chapter 3, extensively addresses the Biblical reasons as to why we can (and must) take the duration of this period literally.

The Book of Revelation describes how at the end of the 1000 years Satan will be released, after which he will again seduce a large portion of mankind and attempt to wage war against Jesus Christ. He was defeated and imprisoned, but once released, he will seek to regain and maintain his claim on the world. It’s actually amazing that Satan will be able to regain people’s trust again in a very short period of time, even though they will have had the opportunity to finally place themselves under the lordship of Jesus Christ as King² for 1000 years without being distracted or influenced by Satan. At that time, Jesus Christ, reigning as King over the earth,

1 See Rev. 20:1-3. There are historical movements that state that Jesus Christ will only return to the earth after the Millennium (post-chiliasm or post-millennialism). They assume that first the Church will be the center of world government during those 1000 years of peace. This thought comes forth from denominations that believe in the replacement theory where the Church has become the spiritual Israel. While studying the main book, we can discern that this understanding deviates from the sequential order of the Biblical feasts and that (covenant) post-millennialism often adopts the allegorical interpretation of prophecy, while on the other hand dispensationalists take the Old Testament prophecies literally and insist that most of them are not fulfilled in the Church, but that they will be fulfilled in and by Israel. While certain facets of the Abrahamic covenant are being fulfilled in the Church, Israel has not yet eternally occupied all of the land promised, that fact giving strong support for an eschatology that places its fulfillment during a literal and coming Millennial Kingdom. See *Israelology*, A. Fruchtenbaum, p. 330, 338, 339

2 See Rev. 20:7-9.

will drive out Satan forever and throw him into the Lake of Fire¹. Only then will the rebellion finally come to an end. That will be the true end of the evil one, and then, a new Heaven and a new Earth will come.

When this all has taken place, the New Jerusalem will descend to the earth. This heavenly city is the abode of the Bride – the place where all the faithful followers of Jesus Christ from all generations will dwell. From this New Jerusalem they will reign with Jesus Christ on earth.² Let us go in greater detail now:

What Will Happen During the Last Seven Years?

The last seven years before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ - with a particular emphasis on the last half of that period- is described as a period of Great Tribulation. It's not the end of the world, but the Book of Revelation tells us that at least two-thirds of the world population will not survive this period. Also, a third of the trees and the fish will be destroyed and a third of all ships will sink. There will be violent wars raging and people will live in a highly controlled and oppressed world. Great deception, famine, hyperinflation, unbearable economic crisis, and all kinds of illnesses will characterize these years. The Bible speaks of a huge meteorite³ and stars⁴ falling on the earth. Also a third part of the sun⁵ and the moon and the stars will be struck, causing the characteristics of the light of day and night, and possibly also the laws of nature, to change. These cataclysmic events will likely cause violent climatic changes, with many geographical and other such consequences for both the land and the seas.

It may seem surreal to us, but in addition to these natural phenomena, there will also be demonic beasts on the earth that will come from the pit of the abyss to torment the people for five months⁶. It will be a tribulation for all living creatures on earth in a way that we can barely imagine. When the need is the greatest – at the end of the seven years – Jesus Christ will return to the earth. At that time, the Bible says that the remnant of Israel will also recognize Yeshua as the true Messiah. In the chapter about the feasts (Chapter 5), we show that this particular day of His return **has to**

1 Rev. 20:10.

2 Rev. chapters 2, 3, 19, 20.

3 Rev. 8:8.

4 Rev. 6:13.

5 Rev. 8:12

6 Rev. 9.

be the Day of Atonement, set in the calendar month of Tishri.¹ The coming of Jesus Christ will then fulfill the shadow picture of the high priest who comes out from the Sanctuary, after he had achieved atonement for the people. On that last Day of Atonement, the Son (as High Priest) will look after the people that have longed for their Messiah for such a long time. Then they will accept Him as their heavenly High Priest. Is this the reality belonging to the shadow in which Joseph made himself known to his brothers in Egypt?

Some suggest that there will immediately be peace
upon the return of Christ

Some think that when Jesus Christ returns to the earth, there will immediately be peace and that everyone will bow before Jesus Christ as King right away. However, the Bible says that Satan and the nations will try to conquer Jesus Christ after His return, and that they will lose in the “Battle of Armageddon.”² At the time of Jesus’ second coming, not every knee will immediately and voluntarily bow before Him. Let’s not forget that the people on earth lived in a period of great deception and confusion. But after a short and decisive battle, Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom on earth from Jerusalem. Although the second coming of Jesus Christ will usher in a period of great peace, Jesus will not come to a peaceful world. A renewal of thinking will take place and years of reconstruction will be needed after intense destruction. From the main book, we understand how and why the scapegoat Azazel will be thrown into the abyss, in anticipation of the final and last Judgment.

The Difference Between Tribulation and the Great Tribulation

Christians all over the world have been persecuted for their faith for twenty centuries and have often been killed for their testimonies. The same is true of the Jewish people and many other minority groups. In some countries Christianity and Judaism have been accepted, but in other countries these religions were and are now strictly prohibited. However, this form of persecution is still something different than the period of the Great Tribulation. In the Bible, this term refers only to the period preceding the second coming of Christ. The second half of this particular

¹ Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 divide the last week of years in two times 3 ½ years. Rev. 11:2 speaks about 42 months of 1260 days and therefore parallels this. The calendar used in Daniel and Revelation uses months of 30 days. To stay synchronous with the years, an extra month is added about every third year (for more information see the Day of Atonement part in the main book), therefore the 1290 days mentioned in Daniel 12:11 coincides exactly with the Day of Atonement 7 years after the last Feast of Trumpets.

² Rev. 19: 17-2.

period of seven years will also be the most difficult period for Israel, but it will be a time when God will eventually save a believing remnant, as the world watches.

Where is the Church in This Period of Great Tribulation?

An important question and point of discussion in many Christian denominations is the following: Where will the Church¹ of Jesus Christ be during that last period of seven years? Throughout the course of time, all kinds of theories have developed. Some of these teachings are overtaken by the facts of history, but let us briefly outline those remaining.

The 4 most common theories are:

- The Church will go through this difficult period of 7 years.
- The Church will remain on earth until halfway through this period and then be raptured.
- The Great Tribulation and the Millennium are figurative or spiritual and will not take place in reality.
- The Church will be raptured from the earth before the Great Tribulation.

Sometimes we hear comments saying that the Bible is not clear and that we have to wait and see, precisely because the opinions are so divided. Or we hear people say that they won't pinpoint a time, but they do believe that He will come at some point. This fits into a spiritual compromise and would also mean that God wouldn't let His future plan be found by those who seek Him and who wish to study His word seriously. This argument, however, goes against the way in which He has revealed Himself for centuries through Biblical patterns. The answer to the question of when He will come, is embedded very deeply in the Bible. One thing is certain: Only one of the theories named above can be Biblically correct.

Theory 1 – The Church Will Go Through the Great Tribulation

There are believers who feel that even those who belong to the Church of Christ will have to go through that very difficult period of seven years. This argument is quite understandable for believers who think that the Church has replaced Israel in God's Plan.² With this in mind, if you study the book of Revelation then you will see that Israel goes through a period called Jacob's trouble³ where Israel is threatened to be

¹ See the main book for the definition of the word "Church".

² If this were true, why would Ps. 89 state that God's promises to Israel are forever and that He will not take His lovingkindness from her?

³ Jer. 30:7.

annihilated. At some point, the end of Israel will appear to be inevitable, but things won't get that far, because God Himself will intervene for the sake of His Holy Name.

God is going to protect His people during that last period in the desert¹. However, this can only be applied to the physical nation of Israel within the Biblical borders of the land Israel. Ezekiel tells that the physical descendants of (all the tribes of) Israel will be brought back from all the nations to Israel, that small country in the Middle East. It is right there that God stands for Israel against the nations, for the sake of His Holy Name. The Book of Ezekiel² and Psalms 83 give exact references as to which people (groups) and countries will first attack Israel during this period. We cannot bypass this literal naming of Israel and the nations. Although some disasters will affect the entire earth, the toughest fight will take place in the Middle East, with Israel as the epi(c)-center. At the end of this period, a part of Israel - which until then was under a veil – will recognize Yeshua Ha Mashiach as their only real Savior. As already indicated in the main book, it is also evident here (from the Biblical context) that the Church and this part of Israel³ are not one and the same in the prophetic writings. However, the Church is connected with the Israeli believers in Yeshua through the True Olive Tree and the Apostle Paul calls them the “Israel of God.”⁴

Ezekiel and the Psalmist describe exactly which people and countries will attack Israel in this period

Replacement theology – something we explain in the main book - has taken away the hope and faith of many believers in the Rapture and even in the Second Coming in the foreseeable future. If this theory is right, then of course, all members of the Church of Christ as “spiritual Israel” must go through a ghastly period before Jesus Christ returns. It is like a Bride who will barely survive. You can see this is an intolerable thought because within this theory, the Church of believers in Jesus Christ would also be attacked by the military forces of the Middle Eastern countries. If this Church is looking forward to the coming of Jesus Christ, then it is with a very bitter taste, because everyone knows that this period will be so dark that most – also those outside Israel- will not survive.⁵

¹ See Jer. 46: 26b-28 and Is. 51:17-23. God starts to deliver Jacob-Israel when the fig tree is once again planted in its own soil. But His salvation comes to a climax during the Great Tribulation. See Zech. 1:14-17, chapter 8 and 12:10-13:1, see Rev. 12:6 as well.

² See Ezekiel chapters 20, 25, 26, 30, 38, 39 and esp. Ezek. 34:13.

³ Be aware, which Israel is being spoken about in this specific Biblical context.

⁴ Gal. 6:16.

⁵ Rev. 9:6.

At the same time, there are no instructions in the Bible on how Christians should prepare for this coming period in which war, disease, death, and the forces of darkness will reign over the world. The question is how the Church of Christ will need to deal with God's wrath over the earth. Will it bypass them because they are still living on this earth?¹ It is odd that there is no call for mental and practical preparation for this period among the believers who feel that the Church will go through the Great Tribulation. Also, a call to vigilance can barely be found within this group. This is all the more remarkable because the future stage for the Great Tribulation is literally being set before our eyes. Yet, it is hardly a real topic of conversation in almost any of these faith communities, let alone a topic of or for prayer. There is even talk of resignation.

The idea that the entire Church must go through the Great Tribulation can also be seen as a contradiction with Jesus' call to be ready at any time to meet Him as the Bridegroom. The thought may arise that the Church would only have to start to prepare for the moment the Great Tribulation begins, because He will not come till after this period. This doctrine also thereby undermines the attitude of continual expectation and preparation, an attitude that is so essential for the Bride. In addition, it also stifles the ability of Christians to warn people of the difficulties soon to come upon the earth.

The replacement theory has taken the hopeful and constant expectation of Him away from the believers, while the Bible certainly emphasizes this. In the first chapters of the main book, we have determined again and again that there are many indications showing us that the Bridegroom has not chosen a Bride who first has to go through the most horrific seven years and come out of that period completely battered, before she meets her Bridegroom. This is precisely the reason why the Bible says that judgment begins at the House of God² – the Church – so that (those who are part of) the Bride can be purified and made ready to meet the Bridegroom, *before* His final judgments on those living on the earth during that last period of seven years.

Supporters of replacement theory must assume that the taking away of the Bride and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ are close to one another. This view may fit in the context of a Western wedding, but we now know from the main book that the ancient Hebrew wedding lasted for seven days as a shadow of the Heavenly Wedding. In the same Western mindset, some argue that the Marriage Supper is not mentioned until

¹ What about I Thess. 5:9, which says that God has not appointed His saints to wrath...

² I Pet. 4:17.

Revelation 19. The argument is that because the Marriage Supper is mentioned in the last book of the Bible just before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the bride will be taken away just before that moment because the Rapture is part of this Wedding. However, in Chapter 6, which describes the Hebrew wedding, we see that the Marriage Supper takes place seven days after the wedding ceremony when the bride and bridegroom come out of the Bridal room where they had withdrawn for those 7 days.¹ This means that Bride and Bridegroom will only then be seen at the Wedding and they will be out of sight for the main part of the “7 days” until the closing meal. The Hebrew wedding week ends immediately after the Marriage Supper and the Bride and Bridegroom depart to their new dwelling. This clearly refers to a period of one week – which is parallel to the 70th week of years in the Book of Daniel² – between the Rapture and the Return. It is only with this explanation that the earthly shadow and the heavenly reality are in agreement with each other.

The last week of years before the Millennium runs parallel with
the 7 days in the Bridal room

There is also another reason why some Christians think that they – as a collective – will go through the Great Tribulation or at least the first 3 ½ years. In the Book of Revelation, all sorts of disasters come over the earth and its inhabitants. Some of these disasters are preceded by the *sounding of a trumpet* and people often assume that the rapture will take place at the moment of that seventh and last trumpet call. This incorrect argument is discussed in the main book in the description of the Feast of Trumpets. Paul writes to the Church in Corinth that we, at the sounding of the “**last** trumpet”, will be raptured³. If you don’t know the Hebrew practice, then you may believe that the last trumpet also really means that all the disasters in the Book of Revelation, which are accompanied by trumpets, will first have to take place. However, Paul is referring here to the last trumpet - the “Tekiah Gedolah”⁴ - of the Feast of Trumpets, in the context of the joyful uniting of Bride and Bridegroom, and not to the very last trumpet that will ever sound on earth in the Great Tribulation. These last trumpets will sound in the context of God’s severe judgment. The term “last trumpet” therefore offers no Biblical support for those who would like to prove, based on this expression, that the rapture can only take place in the middle or at the end of the Great Tribulation.

1 See the words of Laban to Jacob in Gen. 29:27-28: “Fulfil her week ... and Jacob did so and fulfilled her week.”

2 See Dan. 9:24 etc.

3 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

4 The last long note of a series of notes blown at the Feast of Trumpets.

We find another argument in the specific order of the Fall Feasts, which in itself is a shadow of the future reality in Jesus Christ. First comes the Feast of Trumpets on Tishri 1 & 2, and then there are seven full intermediate days, after which the Day of Atonement, starting Tishri 9 in the evening, is soon followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, starting on Tishri 15. In the (hypothetical) timetable that the Church will first go through the Great Tribulation but is raptured just before the Second Coming, the fulfillment of the last Day of Atonement is almost equally as long as the Feast of Trumpets. This is a clear deviation from the shadow image, because God purposely placed the symbolic 7 intermediate (full) days of Tishri 2-9 between these Biblical feasts. And this period between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement is called “the days of awe” just as the period between the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpet and the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement will be called the “period of awe” because it will be awful on earth. This period of days clearly shows that there will be at least seven years between the Rapture and the Return. The sequence of events here reveals a clear shadow of the reality ¹ in Christ in the New Covenant.

God did not place 7 full days between the two
Fall feasts by accident

The Great Tribulation is also mentioned in connection with the exodus from Egypt, which was preceded by a variety of plagues. We must not forget that Israel, as God’s people, was saved from the plagues of Egypt. Believers who have already experienced a personal exodus from Egypt and from the power of Satan, are delivered and do not need to go through another exodus. They are no longer slaves of the modern Pharaoh². They have definitely been transferred to another Master; they belong to another people, as long as they recognize Him and continue to follow Him in faith. Enoch, Noah, Lot, and others that God saved from His judgments³ are good examples of this as well. All of these reasons give us sufficient Biblical grounds to reject the theory that the Church, which is actually preparing for the Rapture, would have to

1 Col. 2:16 is often translated as (KJV) ‘... a shadow of things to come, but the *body* is of Christ.’ The Greek word ‘soma’ however does not mean a literal ‘body’ in the context of this chapter, where Paul confronts the rudiments of the world as they have influenced Greek philosophy. Paul is stating that the shadows show *the reality* in Christ and they are therefore very valuable and even speaking of the future things that He will bring! No one should judge those believers that seek to incorporate the *New Covenant realities* of these shadows into their discipleship walk.

2 In Eph. 2:1-10 Paul writes that the believer is no longer subject to “the principalities of the air”, but that he is risen with Christ and is placed in Christ in heavenly places. The believer has died from the worldly spirits. Col. 2:20.

3 See 2 Pet. 2:9. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished. (KJV)

go through the Great Tribulation.¹ For the readers of the main book, this has already become clear through a correct understanding of the ancient Hebrew wedding ritual and their discovery of the sequence and meaning of the biblical Feasts. We all realize what needs to happen during these seven years, because the Bible describes this time period in detail. The Bride is taken away by the Bridegroom before the Wedding and will be hidden for a period, before she will come out again. We believe that the earthly picture of the Hebrew wedding, that Jesus referred to several times, will be in line with the heavenly reality.

Theory 2 – The Church Will Be Raptured in the Middle of the Great Tribulation

Some think that the Church might be on earth during the first 3 ½ years of the seven year period before it will be taken away. This stems from the idea that the Church is to withhold Satan, as he will try to take power, especially in the first period.² Based on this theory, the Church will still be needed on the earth as an army for Jesus Christ to keep the adversary at bay until the second half of the seven years, the actual period of Great Tribulation for Israel. However, the Bible says that those who dwell on the earth during the Tribulation will be glad that the prophets who had tormented them, are dead.³ If the Bride were still be on earth, this would mean that she would be tormented by God's own prophets! This is biblically impossible because it would mean that God's Kingdom was divided against itself. It is precisely for this reason that the Book of Revelation mentions "those that dwell on earth"⁴ several times, thus letting the reader know the difference between people who are not on earth but in heaven. The first time "those who dwell on earth" is mentioned, is in the letter to the Church of Philadelphia – a church that does what its name means, it "loves the brethren."⁵ This is this Church that receives the promise "that they will be kept from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world!"

The "beast" referred to in Revelation will open his mouth to blaspheme God and *those who live in heaven*(!). However, the devil can only blaspheme from earth – where he is cast down.⁶ "*Those who live in heaven*" will be safe and out of his reach and will dwell with the heavenly Bridegroom.⁷

¹ The church of Philadelphia was promised they would be spared from this tribulation. Rev. 3:10. See more on this later on.

² See 2 Thess. 2:6.

³ Rev. 11:8.

⁴ Rev. 3:10, 6:10, 8:13, 11:10, 13:8,14, 17:2,8.

⁵ The Latin word "filea" speaks of loving and "adelphoi" is the Greek word for "brethren".

⁶ Rev. 12:7.

⁷ Rev. 13:6.

The last period of 3 ½ years in the Bible is called the “time of Jacob’s trouble” and within the second variant discussed here, the Bride is not present. Again, those who have studied the main book know that the heavenly wedding agenda is fully booked for seven years and is a reflection of the traditional Hebrew wedding that lasts for seven days. In this second scenario, they would only be in the House of the Father for 3 ½ years, prior to the Return of Jesus Christ. Also a time of 1260 days is not in accordance with the amount of days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement: whatever be the year that the first or the latter would be fulfilled by Christ Jesus, 2520 days (7 times 360) are needed to bridge this period. Conclusion: This second interpretation has no foundation in the Bible.

Some of those who adhere to the theory that the last generation of believers will have to go through (a part of) the Tribulation, think this is because this generation will have to ‘undo’ the mistakes of the previous generations. They are in fact preaching a kind of Protestant purgatory. Are His Cross and the open grave not enough to save the believers of that last generation, in this context as well? Doesn’t this idea bring division between the believers who are on earth at the time of the Rapture and those that have died in Christ in previous centuries? In essence, this theory seems to indicate that the Cross can only save believers from their past sins, but not from the judgment during the Great Tribulation. The Apostle Paul is quite clear on this in the letter to the Romans:¹

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Theory 3 – The Great Tribulation is Not to Be Taken Literally

Quite a large group within many established churches, and certainly within the Roman Catholic Church, has the firm conviction that the Great Tribulation will not take place in a literal fashion. This conviction is often supported by an enhanced replacement theology, which believes the Church has actually replaced physical Israel in God’s plan for Salvation. In the main book we discover that this replacement theology has emerged from two problems found in the early church: Firstly, its

¹ Rom. 8:8-9 (KJV).

intense hatred of the Jews, and secondly, its adoption of an allegoric mindset stemming from the Greek philosophical influences of the times.¹

At the end of the second century, the School of Antioch² in Syria stressed that the Bible should be taken literally whenever possible. Unfortunately, the Alexandrian school in Egypt became the counterpart to this mindset. They were focused on “higher thinking” and an allegorical Bible interpretation. The Bible was taken much less literally and was mainly regarded as metaphorical. The spiritual meaning always had to be found behind the literal. Under the leadership of Origenes³ and Clemens,⁴ the relationship between the Christian faith and Greek philosophy was “restored.” As a result, the philosophy of Plato became deeply embedded in Bible exegesis. Within Greek thinking, the earthly and physical tend to take a lower place, so the Alexandrian school one-sidedly stressed the deity of Jesus Christ, while at the same time, many followers disputed the humanity of Jesus Christ. Later on there was also discussion about the deity of Christ when a priest, called Arius, took the position that Jesus was not eternal, but only created by God with a Divine purpose. Jesus was thus higher than man but lower in rank than God. The Council of Nicaea rejected this theory in the early 4th century, but this line of thought still lives on in certain contemporary Christian denominations.⁵

Greek thinking and the Alexandrian School had a profound influence on the thinking of the Church in the Middle Ages and effects of this are still visible within Protestant and Catholic churches. Therefore, many future events are still spiritualized and can “never literally take place in the future” within this mindset. Many in these churches are therefore of the opinion that the Millennium already occurred when Jesus Christ came to earth. The period of the church history over the last 2000 years would then be the Millennium. However, the timelines we cover in the main book show very clearly that there are no legitimate grounds for this viewpoint. In addition, if one examines what the Bible says about the Millennium, every attentive reader will realize that both from the world’s perspective and from a spiritual perspective⁶ there has never

1 When you interpret the Bible for the most part spiritually and not literally; this totally goes against the PaRDeS exegesis (see the first chapter of the main book), and it is an interpretation in line with the Greek mindset of those days.

2 This is not an institute or a building, but a mindset. Well known theologians of this school during the first 4 centuries after Christ were: Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodorus of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and John Chrysostomos.

3 He lived from about 185 – 254 AD.

4 He lived from about 115 – 215 AD.

5 And also among other groups like the Jehovah Witnesses.

6 See the persecutions, the time of the crusades and the age old anti-Semitism that is still going on today.

been a Kingdom of Peace. Just think of the world wars, famines, and genocides. Looking at the animal kingdom¹ certainly gives no reason for the thinking that this Millennial peace has already arrived² either.

Many in these churches are of the opinion that the Millennium already came with the coming of Jesus Christ on earth

The full spiritualization of Bible texts, with the rejection of the literal meaning, also strongly goes against solid Bible interpretation. A portion of the Bible can certainly have a spiritual meaning, but such an interpretation never foregoes the first obvious literal meaning.³ Only when a literal interpretation is not possible, does the spiritual meaning take precedent, always of course within its full Biblical context. The supporters of the “church as spiritual Israel”-teachings have never taken this basic interpretation rule into account. In doing so, they have rejected much of the life force of the True Olive Tree, and with it its Biblical-Hebrew way of thinking.⁴

The Book of Revelation shows that Jesus did not yet accept the Kingship of this world when He was on earth. According to His own words, His Kingdom was not of this world, but He is now the King of all of those who, throughout the generations, have been transferred from the Kingdom of darkness to His Heavenly Kingdom. Those Disciples of Christ are already ambassadors of this Kingdom that will be established on earth in the future. Just before Jesus returns, the Bride will be perfected and ready. In other words: the ambassadors will be called back to where the Kingdom is (in Heaven). Then Jesus will accept the Kingship of the earth⁵. He will then return to earth with all the Saints, and only then will He establish His Kingship over the entire earth, from Jerusalem.

A sub-group of believers still feels that everyone’s “personal kingdom of peace” begins when that person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot find any grounds for this theory, though it is true, of course, that the Bible describes that a believer at the time of his rebirth can, by faith, receive the peace offered by the Prince of Peace. This, however, is not the same as the Millennium, as it is described in the Book of Revelation and by the Prophet Isaiah. After all, we have determined in the chapter

1 See Is. 11:6-7, but we don’t recommend a test in your local zoo.

2 See also Micah 4:1-5.

3 See a.o. the 1982 Chicago Declaration on Biblical Hermeneutics

4 See Romans 11.

5 Rev. 19.

on the feasts, that this personal rebirth is actually equal to the liberation from Egypt. After that liberation, the long trek to the Promised Land begins, and part of that trip includes going through the desert. Believers who feel that the Millennium already started with the resurrection of Jesus Christ place the final fulfillment in the Feast of Tabernacles ¹, the seventh feast, instead of in the third feast, Firstfruits. Then they don't know what to do with the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement, causing unnecessary confusion.

The long, dry, (spiritual) period after the fulfillment of the feast of Pentecost, where we are meant to learn faithfulness and obedience to His Word and Holy Spirit, is the shadow of the period in which we now live. But this shadow (and often its meaning too!) is ignored if the Millennium is placed (at Pesach) in the order of feasts before Pentecost ². Again we see that the order and content of the feasts form a very important Biblical frame of mind and an accurate way to test theologies.

The Preterists

Related to these thoughts, is a movement whose followers are known as “preterists.” ³ This group of believers is of the opinion that the fulfillment of all biblical prophecies has already taken place since the first century AD. Within their line of thought, the Book of Revelation is passed history, embedded in spiritual symbolism, or perhaps comforting poetry. Most scholars agree that this movement started at the beginning of the 17th century ⁴ by the Jesuit Luis de Alcazar. His work was a tool for the Roman Catholic Church in its fight against the emerging Protestant movement.

And still today, many in the Catholic Church hold on to this preterism ⁵ that fits the spiritualization of the Bible and their (replacement) positions about Israel. We will take some time in this book to discuss the thinking behind preterism because many modern movements of our time are in fact based on this thinking, although they

1 A feast that finds its fulfillment at the start of the Millennium and which we rehearse until then, looking forward to His Great Sabbath, His seventh Day.

2 If you believe that the Millennium (Feast of Tabernacles) has already started after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Pesach) then the devil should be bound right now and he can no longer tempt the nations, for the Bible places that event in connection with the Millennium. Do we see that taking place? See Rev. 20:1-5.

3 From the Latin word *praeteritus*, that means “past tense” or “what has passed”.

4 *Vestigatio arcani sensus in Apocalypsi* (1614), written by the Jesuit Luis de Alcazar (1554 – 1613). De Alcazar assumed that all events in the book of Revelation – except the last 3 chapters – were past tense. The last 3 chapters start with the Return of Christ.

5 Hugo de Groot was an important promotor of this teaching and nowadays Tom Wright (also known by his writers alias name N. T. Wright) is a figurehead for this movement.

often do not reference it explicitly. Especially the **Kingdom Now theology and the Emerging Church-thinking** are influenced by preterism.

In the eyes of the preterists, most of the prophecies from the Book of Revelation were fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and the Jews were scattered over the earth. Only the Return of Christ, according to *most* preterists, must still literally take place in the future¹. But other movements within the Roman Catholic Church go even further, stating that the Kingdom has already started 2000 years ago². If you are of this opinion, then you will have to find a theological solution for the Return of Christ, which in the literal Bible text and in the words of Jesus will take place before the Millennium. Adherents think to have found this solution by implementing a spiritual, symbolic, or even poetic interpretation of the Book of Revelation. The preterists, among others, find support for their thinking in the Gospel of Matthew:

*Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away
till all these things take place.*³

Jesus explains in this section which events will take place directly before His Return. There will be wars and His disciples and the Jews as a nation will be persecuted and hated by all the nations⁴. But according to the preterists, the New Testament writers were talking about the last days of the Old Covenant and not about the last days of our age before the Return of Christ. Within that theory, Jesus Christ did not come back visibly, but His arrival had to be seen as the coming of “a judgment,” sealed by the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Some say that Emperor Titus was the antichrist, but most of the preterists say that the antichrist should not be seen as a person, but more like a false doctrine that arose⁵ at that time.⁶ Whoever reads about this mindset, understands that the literal value of each biblical prophecy has to be denied in an attempt to maintain this theory. In that case there is no sense in warning people about a future “beast” – as described in Revelation - who will derive his power from Satan and the “mark of the beast.”

1 These are the so called “Partial Preterists” who only take the last 3 chapters of Revelation to be literal and to be fulfilled in the future (return, millennium, new heaven and earth)

2 This group consists mostly of “Non- partial Preterists”; for them all of Revelation is past tense or simply allegoric.

3 Mat. 24:34.

4 Mat. 24:6,9.

5 Some preterists however think that the emperor Nero could have been the beast of Revelation.

6 See also “Raptureless, an optimistic guide to the end of the world”, www.raptureless.com

There is also “partial preterism.” According to this thinking, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ was established on earth at His first advent and this Kingdom will grow to its full glory through the ages, *after* which Jesus Christ will return¹. At this point, Catholic theology has a different interpretation than a number of Protestant Evangelical churches. The Roman Catholic Church holds firmly to a spiritual interpretation of many prophetic writings and doesn’t anticipate the taking away of the Bride and the Return of Jesus. Is this because the Pope traditionally has a powerful position as the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth?

We can often find a connection between (partial) preterism and the Kingdom Now movement, whose thinking has branched out in many denominations. This movement was originally a movement with a label. Today, this thinking has nestled into the theologies of many churches, but without this label being visible. Therefore, “the content of this unlabeled bottle” has already been poured out in many congregations and nations. In fact, it is spreading like wildfire, although not recognizable as such. Perhaps you have never before heard of “Kingdom Now” or the “Kingdom thinking,”² but you will probably recognize more of this thinking as you read on. Many sincere “missionary churches” - and that term is becoming popular these days - wrestle with following the correct biblical course in this field of tension³ today.

Preterists often accuse other Christians of being “apathetic and complacent;” that they are “just sitting back and waiting for the Return of Jesus.” This is said because they don’t become engaged in improving their culture in light of the idea that Jesus is coming back soon anyway. While we believe this is absolutely not true – and therefore an improper argument - we also believe that the preteristic view has a very serious side effect because their view destroys the exhortation to Christians to be “watchmen on the wall.”⁴ Preterism, by its very nature, stifles Christians’ abilities or ignores the calling to warn people of what is going to happen on the earth.

In the chapter on the Jewish wedding ritual, we determine that alertness, with regard to the signs of the times and the missionary task of the Bride, belong together, and they should not be seen as opposites. By calling them opposites, we are presented

1 That return is the subject of the last 3 chapters of revelation and here the partial preterist believes the literal interpretation.

2 Also known as the Dominion-theology or the “Heaven on earth”- theory

3 Some believe that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is already established on earth while others believe that they are heralds of the heavenly Kingdom to be established on the earth after the Return of Jesus Christ. Does it make any difference in our actions?

4 See the warning for these dis-functional watchmen in Ezekiel 33:6.

with a false dialectical choice¹, because the Church of Christ should not have to choose between the two, but is called to do both.

The Kingdom Now movement is not just taking a position against the expectation of an imminent Return of the Messiah, but it especially takes a position against the idea that the darkness in the world is *increasing* and that a period of Great Tribulation will take place before the Return of Christ. As we look back at events that have shaped the world since the 1980s, we are shocked at how drastically the world has changed; how many things have fallen into place to fulfill Bible prophecies that were still unthinkable a few decennia ago. But all these historic events have no biblical meaning for preterists.

The Church of Christ should not have to choose between
being watchful for His coming and her missionary task
on earth, but do both.

That the believer in Jesus Christ has a task to rule as good stewards over this earth is correct². It is believed that everything on this earth will improve as soon as the followers of Christ take their positions. Now both aspects are basically true; in those places where Christians take their God-given position of good and loving stewardships, something changes for good and God has given the Body of Christ (please note: spiritual) authority to take that position³. At the same time, the Bible does say that the spirit of the antichrist is present throughout the ages.⁴ This will come to a climax in the end times - before His Return - in the person of the Antichrist who will embody this spirit more than ever⁵, after which the final liberation and also the final judgment will take place. That is the central theme of the Book of Revelation. We cannot deny that we are confronted daily with a quickly deteriorating world. This is all happening right before our very eyes.

1 This is called a dialectic method, when a listener has to make a choice between two opposite viewpoints, while the truth should allow many more nuances. Often from that false contradiction a new synthesis is elevated, which causes a further deviation from the Biblical truth.

2 This is the task Adam and Eve were given in paradise. They were appointed to rule under God.

3 See Luke 10:19.

4 2 Thess. 2:7. Paul switches the gender of the article from the neuter (v.6 - to katexov) to the masculine (v.7 - o katexwn). This supports the thought that the restrainer has to be a (beastly) system and a person (antichrist) at the same time.

5 See Dan. 8:19-26, which speaks of a king of fierce countenance and darkness, who will stand up and oppose the Prince of princes in the time of the end.

In the Kingdom Now mindset believers achieve the Kingdom on earth in Jesus' name and they have the authority of the Kingdom. Many hardly ever speak about a spiritual authority¹, but often about "ruling" the different sectors of society and about a practical service, giving hands and feet to following the example of Jesus in well doing. When almost everything is established under the dominion of this Kingdom, then Jesus Christ can return to earth as King. Sometimes it is no longer about the literal return as some speak about the arrival of a Christ-spirit, a thought with strong resemblance to the mindset we also find in the New Age movement.

A number of partial preterists believe that Jesus and Christ are also separated from each other! Jesus is the Head while the Church is the body of "the Christ" in their line of thinking. In their conviction, Jesus and the Church form "the Christ" together. Believers are the Body and the feet are part of the body, therefore, the earth will also be subject "to the believers." Although the text of Hebrews 10 expressly refers to the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, according to the supporters of this theory, this actually refers to the Church, which is His Body. But a number of adherents go even further; as the embodiment of Christ, believers are therefore themselves "Christ." Only the believers who have received this "new revelation," act according to this big "secret." But this is not a new revelation, such as claimed by these followers, but the same falsehood that the devil told the first human couple. They were told that they would be "like God." This way of thinking is eerily close to the so-called "mind science," to the convictions of the gnostic and to many other old and new religions that want to separate the person of Jesus from Christ.²

The taking away of the Bride and the future Return of the Messiah are removed from this type of "Kingdom gospel," at least the emphasis on a pure and spotless Bride longing for His coming is no longer there. When followers of this gospel talk about Christ's return, they don't mean the literal return of Christ, but that Jesus, through His ('informed') church, will reveal His will and His principles more and more, improving this world in the process. According to the Kingdom Now gospel, the Church does not go to heaven, but the "conquerors," under the authority of "God's apostles and prophets," acquire power in all sectors of society to just bring heaven to

1 As Jesus says in Luke 10:19 or Paul in Eph. 6:10-20 about the spiritual armor. It is true that spiritual authority also entails practical actions. But practical actions without His spiritual authority and guidance do not build the earthly kingdom of Christ.

2 See for example I John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son." See also John 20:31, Acts 17:3, 18:5, I John 5:1. We find an excellent interpretation in the (Dutch) book of J. Dieleman, *The coming of the King of kings*, page 159 etc.

earth. There will be no rapture. According to these followers, the word rapture refers more to a sense of spiritual excitement.¹

People who have thoroughly studied the main book, *Wake Up!*, will understand that all the discussed signs, patterns and timelines have to be put aside by the Kingdom Now movement in order to adhere to its theory. This theology has basically no biblical basis, but has the same Enlightenment mindset that men will become more perfect, although here it is expected that this will be done by divine influence and not just by human efforts. Do we really see this perfection of mankind in our time? Our observations show us that this is not the case in the real world.

Emerging Church: God is not exclusive for Christianity

The statement that the world is developing more and more in the direction of God's Kingdom on earth, is also at odds with the words of Jesus, when He describes the situation on earth just before His Return². Although this Kingdom theology knows its origin in the United States of America, it seems to be having an increasing impact on Western Europe. It has become a major reason that many Christians actually prefer not to talk about the Return of Christ. Logically, the picture of the Bride and the Bridegroom fades as well. If in your church, the taking away of the Bride and the Return are no longer topics, will you still hear calls for vigilance, repentance, and holiness, to insure that believers may be found without spot and blameless when Jesus returns?³. If not, then it is important to figure out which motivation or assumption is behind this silence. Sometimes the reason is to keep these topics "neutral," but sometimes this is the result of a deep-rooted mindset.

While the Kingdom Now theology still assumes a dominant approach to the world, the Emerging Church movement has gone a whole step further. They don't look for a dominance of Christian thinking in society, but rather for an (often compromised) Christianity, a message that is acceptable for unbelievers and that is added to the spectrum of many religions. This mindset officially keeps an emphasis on Christian thinking; at least it supports the major points.

¹ The word rapture, as being caught up could have a possible link with excitement, but the Greek word "harpadzo" in the original has nothing to do with this. In Thess. 4:17, II Cor. 12:2 and Rev. 12:5 this word can only mean a very sudden physical taking away to heaven. Also in Acts 8:39 the term "harpadzo" is used in the same way to describe the physical transfer of Philip, when taken away from the eunuch.

² See Matt. 24.

³ 2 Pet. 2:9-14.

According to the Emerging Church movement, Christianity now has a minority position in the West and therefore (!) her modesty is befitting. This movement partially builds on the Kingdom mindset, but this kingdom already looks quite different. Within the Emerging Church – which doesn't want to be placed in a box and defies every description of itself – the dominating thought is that God is so great that we can hardly contain Him. In itself this view is biblically true, but the reasoning continues to purport that even Christianity is too small for God and God is too large for Christianity. Apparently, Christ was wrong when He stated that He is the only Mediator.

Therefore, nobody is able to understand God's greatness and this is why we need each other, to put all the various facets together. Together, Christians and believers from other religions are able to understand God better and this is the way God has meant it to be.

Of course, in this approach every believer retains his own religion or interpretation. Within that frame of mind, the Bible will also get another place. For the Christian, this may remain an important book, but now this book should be viewed in addition to all the other books of all other religions. In their opinion God has not only chosen Christianity but many religions to show His diversity, implying that Christians should be modest in a multi-religious society. However, according to this line of thinking, Christians are invited to explain their position, but preferably in dialogue and in cooperation with other religions, that all hold a part of the jigsaw called 'Truth.' One gets the impression that where the Kingdom Now thinking is still largely trying to stick to a private interpretation of the Bible, many in the Emerging Church have evolved to a kind of post-preterism: they no longer believe in a literal return of Jesus Christ and the Bible now shares its authority with insights from other religions¹. On the other hand, ever more supporters of the Emerging Church² seem to be open for the coming of the Christ-spirit,³ a spirit leading to another gospel.⁴

Both movements certainly overlap when it comes to the "here and now." Instead of the idea that time is short and that is all the more important to bring His saving

1 Note: No doubt there are Christians who are attracted to aspects of postmodern Emerging Church thinking, but they do not stand for these extreme points of view that many in the Emerging Church have opened themselves to.

2 Please note that many Christians in the missionary movement see themselves as part of the Emerging Church. In many cases they are not aware of all the characteristics described above. Young missionary churches often don't identify with the Emerging Church, although they share their critical viewpoint of the established churches and their methods.

3 See, *A wonderful deception*, Warren Smith, ed. Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2009.

4 Gal. 1:6.

gospel to mankind, another paradigm takes its place: Christians can improve the world through active social programs, and they are to build networks and get involved in politics and businesses in order to transfer biblical principles. Many followers of these movements see this as following Jesus Christ and establishing the Kingdom. This new paradigm connects with the motivation of many missionary churches, which in turn easily go along with this mindset.

Within the Emerging Church movement, the spiritual meaning of the deliverance from Egypt, (crossing the “Red Sea” and going to “Mount Sinai” in its New Covenant meaning of deliverance, cleansing and redemption through the Cross and of being filled by the Holy Spirit for a journey of obedience), is no longer part of the message to an unconverted world. Following Jesus Christ should just be practical, because He is worthy to be followed.

Deliverance and repentance are no longer determining topics, since they no longer fit in post-modern thinking. Although it is biblical for Christians to have a spiritual influence on their environment and to be sensitive to the needs of fellow human beings, Bible believing people know that the Kingdom of God on earth will come when the King comes back to sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem, after He has accepted the Kingship in heaven.¹ That biblical truth does not relieve us of our responsibility as ambassadors of that Heavenly Kingdom, but prevents us from *only* focusing on social programs. If we bear in mind that God’s Kingdom is not of this world and we correctly and fully understand God’s Plan of Salvation, then we know that unbelievers can only enter this Kingdom through repentance and through the blood of Jesus Christ and not through the earthly rule of Kingdom Now-supporters. Thus the image of the main book returns, in which we are freed from our “Egypt” and cleansed by God Himself, having applied the blood of the Lam on the doorposts of our lives. Then by His power we constantly remove sin from our lives, and at the same time enter into a constant progressive (and spiraling) relationship in which reconciliation, recovery and growth into His image are the focus. When all these aspects are not a reality in our discipleship walk, then we are not able to follow Him and overcome through obedience. At the same time, alert Bible readers realize that the current world will backslide before the Return of Jesus Christ and that the man of perdition² will appear in this world. Jesus compares that period with the very dark days prior to the flood, in the time of Noah³. When in spite of His words a believer has

¹ See Rev. 11:15-17.

² II Thess. 2:3.

³ Matt. 24:37.

chosen the path that the Bible contains no literal prophecy but that these prophecies only had or have a spiritual or symbolic meaning, his understanding of the realities of the world around him is greatly diminished.

But whoever understands the patterns, timelines, and sequence of the biblical feasts also has much better discernment regarding the time in which we live. Then the words that Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles spoke about this time will come to life in their full meaning. Somewhere on their journey, the “Kingdom Now” thinking and the Emerging Church movement have adopted many convictions of Preterism. The “partial Preterists” still believe in a real Return of Jesus Christ, but together with the full Preterists many supporters don’t believe in a future antichrist. Nor do they believe in a period of great tribulation, or in a concrete Millennium, and certainly not in a future role for Israel as a nation.

Our “building of the Kingdom” will not usher in the return
of Jesus Christ. His Times are already appointed.

Meanwhile, Rick Warren has sold many millions of books and tens of thousands (!) of Christian churches have followed Rick Warren’s 40-day program for the “purpose driven church” because these courses have seemed so successful. While his books and programs contain some good insights, some statements are surprising. For example, Warren Smith quotes Rick Warren¹ as stating that Bible prophecy keeps us from the task that God gives us and that it is not our business to be busy with the Return of Christ.² This is a picture of a Bride who prefers to build the home herself for the Bridegroom, instead of preparing herself for His arrival. Is the search for the meaning of prophecy a diversionary tactic and does it really make us unsuitable for the Kingdom? Do we need to work and build His Kingdom here ourselves and will we bring about the Return of Christ in doing so? In other words, is it true that the Bridegroom will come if we work hard enough on His *earthly* home? We need to be careful not to be removed from the truth God Himself has placed within the patterns and shadows. In Matthew 24 Jesus gave very important details related to His Return so that no one would seduce the faithful! His words exhort us to pray and be watchful and to do so effectively certainly includes a keen understanding of the prophetic Scriptures. The Lord also instructs us to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness,

¹ Rick Warren prayed the inauguration prayer over Obama in 2008 and became famous throughout the world. He is the pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California.

² *Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren, p. 285: “If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy.” Quoted in *A Wonderful Deception*, by Warren Smith, Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2009. This author deals with a number of related subjects that he identifies to be false doctrine.

and while demonstrating a holy walk, to exercise our influence, being the salt of the earth. Yes, we are called to evangelize this world and surely God is looking for that fullness of the Gentiles to come in. But Jesus' words do not mean that we have to work on a Kingdom on earth that absorbs us in all kinds of activities, certainly when the expense includes missing a Godly lifestyle and looking expectantly for Him. It's not our "building of the Kingdom" that will bring about the Return of Jesus Christ. His Times are already appointed. As soon as He comes back to the earth as King, His good servants may reign with Him, and what we do on earth now is an important preparation for this. But it is not the Bride but the Father of the Bridegroom who holds the key of His coming.

Theory 4 – The Church of Christ Won't Go through the Great Tribulation

Through the ages there have always been groups that have held to the doctrine that from the first century God never intended Israel to be replaced by the Church. This is because God cannot and will not break the Covenant with His people. These groups – who believe that the Bride of Jesus Christ will be taken away before the Great Tribulation - are mostly found within Baptist and some Evangelical and Pentecostal groups.¹ Also, certain denominations of the established churches are much more open today to the biblical view that the Church of Christ will be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation. They believe that then the Church of Christ will return later with Jesus Christ to reign with Him a literal time of 1000 years. According to this way of thinking, Israel as a nation and the remnant of the people of Israel (that will recognize Jesus Christ as Messiah) will be the center of the earthly government, together with the Bridegroom Who has returned as the King of kings.

This option seems to be the most appealing for Christians. After all, nobody wants to go through the Great Tribulation. But that desire cannot just be a wish, there must also be a clear and preferably a multi-faceted biblical basis for this claim.

In the Book of Revelation, Jesus says to the believers of the Church of Philadelphia² that they will be kept from the hour of trial, which is going to come over the earth, because they have kept His command to expect Him. This church, whose name refers to the great affection among the brethren, is one of two churches named last in the book of Revelation. It is also the image of one of the groups of believers who will be on earth during the end-times before the Great Tribulation.

¹ Even in these churches there is the influence of Kingdom Now and Emerging Church thinking amongst individual believers, causing the message of the Return to disappear into the background.

² Rev. 3:10.

Another group **of believers** is represented by the Laodicean Church. But Jesus Christ says to these church members that He will spit them out of His mouth because they are lukewarm. These believers – when found in previous and today’s generations – have been and are seriously warned. For the last generation the arrival of the Bridegroom might overtake them like a thief in the night¹. This is also a reference to the parable of the ten virgins, of which only five went with the Bridegroom into the Wedding Hall², and five had to remain outside because they were not prepared³. One thing is certain: the believers who think they “will see it when it comes” deny themselves much perspective and hope, but also a lot of insight into the time in which we live. It remains to be seen if these believers can have sufficient oil in their lamps when that moment suddenly arrives. For the period before the arrival of the Bridegroom provides many religious and other distractions and a lot of superficial thinking. The postmodern thinking of our time makes it more difficult for many believers to keep their focus on the absolute truth of the Bible, even more so if they are not very aware of the presence of this type of thinking in their environment. In many ways this postmodern thinking twists biblical truth. At first this subtle but constant adding of ‘new insights’ is causing believers to be gradually drawn into another frame of mind, without even being able to put it into words. This is what we see happening in many churches.

There are Bible scholars who believe that the theory of the Rapture of the Bride before the Great Tribulation is not Biblical, because before the 17th century this view was hardly a part of the established doctrine. Therefore, this doctrine has only developed during the last three hundred years. This in itself is not a reason to dismiss this doctrine as incorrect. The chapter in the main book that deals with 20 centuries of church history provides more insight. For a more accurate view, we can best go back to the situation and interpretation used when Jesus Christ was on the earth. The first Church lived in expectation of the Rapture of the faithful before the period of the Great Tribulation because they based it on the literal meaning of the biblical texts. Many church fathers still taught this position in the following centuries. Ephraim

1 An expression that Christians use as an excuse not to have to be watchful.

2 Matt. 25.

3 The parable doesn’t say that these 5 virgins are lost. They stand outside the Wedding Hall.

the Syrian ¹ emphasized in one of his sermons ² that the Saints and Elect of God would be removed prior to the Great Tribulation:

“For all the Saints and Elect of God are gathered, prior to the tribulation that will come, and are taken by the Lord, so that they do not see the confusion that will overwhelm the world because of our sins.” (translation)

He encouraged believers to live lives of purity and preparation. But it is certainly true that this vision has been steadily abandoned since the 4th century AD, especially at the hands of Augustine, ³ who interpreted the Bible allegorically and sometimes even in an imaginary way. Consequently, the Rapture of the faithful began to be seen as spiritual rather than literal. Even the Reformation could not shake off the doctrines of Augustine and the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. The replacement theology that described the Church as the new spiritual Israel for sixteen centuries, was the same theology that contributed to the widespread hatred of the Jews. And that same process kept the understanding of the Rapture as a literal event away from ordinary people for a long time.

The understanding of the Rapture of the Church has
been obscured for at least 14 centuries

It was only in the 17th century – with the rise of the Puritans in England – that the freedom of choice for the literal interpretation of the Bible returned. ⁴ From that moment on, there was more openness about the future return of the Jews to Israel, along with a new understanding about the Rapture of the Church of Christ. This theology that the earlier Bible interpreters had tried to do away with, was not anything new in the 17th century. It had simply been obscured for nearly 14 centuries!

1 306-373 AD. Also called Ephraem (or Efreem) of Nisibis. He was one of the great theologians of the early Byzantine Church. Since 1920 the Roman Catholic Church honors him as a church teacher. Ephraem was the most important speaker and writer of the Syrian church fathers, and a witness of early Christianity at the verge of the Roman Empire in the fourth century.

2 Sermon “On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World”. See *“The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition”* by Paul Julius Alexander; ed. University of California Press, 1985, p. 210. Dr. P.J. Alexander is one of the scientists with the highest authority in the area of writings of the early Byzantine church. See also *“Triumphant Return”* of Grant Jeffrey. The text of this sermon could be found on the internet during 2016.

3 See especially his work *“The Civitate Dei”*, 413 AD.

4 See I. Mather (1639-1723). In 1687 P. Jurieu wrote his book *Approaching Deliverance of the Church* and in 1790 E. Lacunza wrote *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the well-known Scofield Study Bible¹ brought the doctrine of the future taking away of the Bride to the foreground. We believe that this return to believing the literal truth in biblical interpretation has been a priceless rediscovery. However, many denominations, within both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, still choose to adhere to Augustine's principles and allegorical teachings. Even now as prophecies come true before our very eyes, the facts of many Bible portions are ignored within these denominations.

More than ever, we need to dare to ask ourselves which views on the Rapture and the Great Tribulation are true. Each position has consequences. Believers who expect the church to go through the terrible times of the Great Tribulation should be preparing for this period. Sometimes this comes with attempts to be totally self-sufficient, putting the most focus on earthly survival. Although self-sufficiency can be a good initiative for the end times, it cannot in itself save you during the Great Tribulation. Other believers do nothing because they no longer believe that these things will happen. Or they do believe they will happen but that God will provide for them. This latter thought reveals a distressing lack of understanding concerning the extent and impact of this period of immense Tribulation. This lack of understanding is not surprising because very often this group doesn't take the Bible literally and they often find the Book of Revelation too complex or too fanciful. That is very unfortunate because a very special time is awaiting the Bride and she should already be in a state of exciting anticipation and preparation, both in life and in testimony. Those who are aware of this will quite drastically - but at the same time remaining in His peace - adjust their priorities. Indeed, the Bride who expects the arrival of the Bridegroom will focus completely on preparation in her walk and testimony, as explained in greater detail the main book.

The Rapture Before the Great Tribulation Fits in the Larger Context

God has a special plan for the Bride of Jesus Christ and we believe that this also means that this Bride won't go through the Great Tribulation. This is our conviction and we want to support this further with biblical texts and especially how this all fits within biblical context. This conviction is supported by patterns and shadows that God placed in the Bible long ago. Many of these patterns and their links have remained underexposed until today because they are embedded in our Biblical-Hebrew heritage, which has been rejected for many centuries. The sequence of the feasts suggests that the Rapture of the Bride is the next big event on God's feast

¹ First printed in 1909.

calendar. Only after those seven years will Jesus Christ Return on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, in conjunction with the (fulfillment of the) Day of Atonement (“Yom Kippur”). The main book supports this vision in all its details.

Believers who feel that the Church will be raptured only “after” this period of seven years must assume that immediately upon their arrival in heaven, they will need to return to the earth. This is because Jesus Christ comes immediately after the Great Tribulation as King¹. This idea is especially troublesome from the perspective of a Jewish wedding and how it was celebrated in the days of Jesus Christ. This earthly wedding was a reflection of the heavenly wedding². A Western wedding ceremony takes an hour at most, and even with a party or reception, it might only take a day. But the Jewish wedding³ that Jesus referred to in the gospels and in the book of Revelation is an accurate shadow of the heavenly wedding. And the seven-day length happens to coincide with the principle of the seventy weeks in the Book of Daniel, where a day is counted as a year. A rapture just before the beginning of the seven years of Tribulation provides the space for the Bride, not only to partake of the final Marriage Supper⁴ but also to partake in all described stages of the wedding week. The Marriage Supper is only mentioned in the 19th chapter of Revelation, after the Lord has passed His “week” of judgments on the earth. This also is perfectly in line with the earthly shadow, as the closing ceremony of the marriage supper is held when bride and bridegroom, after a week, come out of the bridal room.⁵

The Rapture is not synonymous with the Return of Christ

An important difference between the Rapture and the Return is that Jesus as Bridegroom meets the believers in the air⁶ to take His Bride to the Father’s House. At that moment, Jesus will not be returning to the earth. In the earthly shadow, the bridegroom does not come to the bride to stay in the house of the bride’s parents. He only has the carriage with him to carry the bride, while he is expected to immediately come with her to the chupah (an open tent canopy) for the start of the wedding ceremony. The Rapture is an event that will surprise the world. The

1 Rev. 17:14 and 19:14.

2 Rev. 19:6 etc.

3 See Gen. 29:27 as an example. Jacob had to fulfil *the week* of the wedding.

4 Rev. 19.

5 See Rev. 16:17. It is done: all vials have passed. See Rev. 19:1-2 speaking again about His judgments, now also including the great whore Babylon. We repeat: it is only after the ‘year-week’ of His tribulation judgments on earth has passed, that Rev. 19:9 speaks about the marriage supper, as being the closing ceremony.

6 1 Thess. 4:15.

unbelievers won't see the Rapture take place because the Bride will be snatched away in a split second¹ from her earthly home. For the world, it is also a sudden event of which the exact moment cannot be determined. The strong indications that the Rapture will take place in the fall during the (heavenly) Feast of Trumpets² is still a mystery that will only be understood when the pattern of the feasts is studied and spiritually understood and internalized. Understanding will already now lead to daily preparation!

How different will the Return of Jesus Christ be? This return will be a very public event. The Bible says that every eye will see Him when He comes from Heaven to set His feet on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Halfway through the Great Tribulation the inhabitants on earth can determine - exactly - the day of the Return, according to the number of days that the prophet Daniel was told³. The Return of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives is therefore not an event of which "nobody knows the day or the hour." Satan will know when Jesus Christ is coming. He will therefore be gathering an enormous international army (this process takes considerable time!) and he will do everything he can in that last period to try to destroy the Jewish nation. And when he doesn't succeed, he will try to kill all human life on earth. This last period is called "the days of Jacob's trouble"⁴ and will have an effect on all the inhabitants of the earth.

Not every knee on earth will bow for Jesus Christ when the Bride is taken away. Rather, we believe that this event will be the beginning of the last seven-year period and the coming of the antichrist, who will then no longer be restrained by the Spirit-filled Bride of the Lamb. The Bride who, until then was present on earth, has been given authority by Christ to exercise power over the enemy⁵. When she walks in the power of the Holy Spirit, the devil has to flee. But when she is no longer there, the devil has even more opportunity to influence, seduce and oppress.

1 1 Thess. 4:17, in "a twinkling of an eye", in a split second.

2 In the main book we explain that the heavenly calendar possibly deviates from the earthly calendar. No matter what, our heart attitude to remain watchful on a daily basis is necessary, even when there are clear links with the Feast of Trumpets.

3 Dan. 12:10-13.

4 Jer. 30:7. We already see the prelude of this trouble in our days, as we watch the rising antisemitism. Jesus says in Matt. 24:22 that no flesh would be saved unless those days were shortened by God.

5 Luke 10:19.

We now understand that with the Rapture of the Bride, Satan will not yet be dealt with¹ and the start of the Millennium is at least seven years away². But as soon as Jesus Christ returns on the Mount of Olives, Satan and his demons will be dealt with in this last war before the Millennium starts.³

Let's still look at some more Bible scriptures, prophecies from Old Testament prophets, types, and Biblical feasts. From these we will be able to further conclude whether we should expect the Rapture of the Church of Christ before the Great Tribulation or not. Before we do this, it is important to place our search in a framework. This framework is described extensively in the main book. During this description we, among other, underlined the following:

- Sometimes things become unclear when we use isolated Bible verses in conjunction with other Bible verses.
- A Bible verse should always be viewed within the context of the whole chapter, the whole book, and the whole Bible.
- Another important factor is realizing the context of the time in which the passage happened. For example, what rituals from those times does the Bible passage relate to?
- It also helps to consult other Bible translations, preferably the (original) Hebrew or Greek translations, to get the correct idea.

Literal Promises of the Rapture Before the Seven Years of Tribulation

In the Book of Revelation Jesus tells a small group of believers who have kept the Word of God and didn't deny His name, that He will keep them from the hour of trial which shall come **upon the whole world**⁴. In other words, God promises that sincere believers will be saved from this period. His words also contradict the idea that the Church of Christ will be saved from the Tribulation in a special way, while on the earth. Most disasters of the Great Tribulation will affect or strike all the inhabitants of the world, and in this respect, the Bible explicitly states that the afflictions are

1 From the chapter of the feast we learned that this only happens at the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement, when our High Priest leaves the heavenly Sanctuary. The fulfilment of the Day of Atonement takes place with the Return of Christ. Satan will resist for a short while so that he can avoid becoming the scapegoat (the reality of the goat for Azazel) with the consequences of the abyss. See the main book.

2 That is the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles.

3 The well-known war of Armageddon. There will be one last and major confrontation at the end of the Millennium.

4 Rev. 3:10.

reserved for those that are unjust (or unjustified) but that He will deliver the godly.¹ Only the 144,000 chosen ones from all the tribes of Israel – who have a special function in this period - will be sealed by God before His wrath is poured out on the world. They will remain on earth during a part of the tribulation period until they also will be called (raptured) into His presence, having fulfilled their role.² A remnant of the people of Israel will also be protected against some of the attacks of Satan and some of the disasters mentioned in Revelation. But many inhabitants of Israel (and the world) will not survive this time.

Jesus tells the (end time) church of Philadelphia – a picture of believers who are not lukewarm and who keep His Word, waiting for Him in a watchful manner – that they will be kept from the hour of trial that comes upon the whole world. This can only mean that these godly believers are among those that God will deliver, as the epistle of Peter states as well.

Paul writes that there will be a sudden disappearance³. The Greek word “harpadzo”⁴ means “taken away with force” or “snatched away.” It is remarkable that Jesus gives this promise to the church of Philadelphia, which had “little strength,” while six other churches are also mentioned. We submit that these churches are in turn also a shadow of groups of believers that lived in previous generations but also in the end times⁵. These churches receive stern words, but most of them also words of heavenly admonition or encouragement. And in order to receive a heavenly crown, all churches are called upon to overcome. Here, Jesus Christ makes a clear difference between different types of believers, just as in the parable of the ten virgins. We cannot dismiss the words He speaks to these types of believers.

Conclusion: The whole story of the Ten Virgins and His Words to the Seven Churches show that **choices can be made and behavior can be changed**. There is no pre-classification or pre-destination.

1 2 Pet. 2:9.

2 See Rev. 7:4 and 14:1.

3 1 Thess. 4:17.

4 Strong's nr. 726.

5 A few Bible scholars identify the 7 churches with historical periods in church history. This is a possible explanation. On the other hand, types of these 7 churches could well be present today, across the landscape of churches.

After Revelation 3, there are no more instructions for the Church of Christ

In the Book of Revelation, we also find the next bit of evidence. When John receives his Revelation of Jesus Christ, he has to write down everything he has seen, what was and what will happen thereafter¹. It seems like God is showing John three periods.

In the first 3 chapters of Revelation, the Church of Christ is often and explicitly mentioned. But then the Book of Revelation seemingly shows the end of a time period. In Revelation 4, a trumpet sounds and John is allowed to climb up to Heaven to see “what will happen after these things.” This section is about a sequence of events on earth. In this second part of the Book of Revelation, we no longer find instructions for the Church of Christ and we no longer encounter situations that involve the godly Church of Christ.² There are groups of believers mentioned later on in Revelation who have “washed their clothes.” This is referring to large groups of people who have repented³ or who have become believers after the start of the Great Tribulation. They will pay for this with their lives, in a world which at that time will be fully at war with believers “who have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”⁴ By repenting and making the right choice, they will have washed their clothes and have been made white (clean) by the blood of the Lamb.⁵ When the Bride has been taken away from earth, and after the 144,000 have been called into His presence,⁶ a longsuffering God, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance⁷ will send an angel⁸. This angel will supernaturally preach God’s everlasting gospel of good news, as well as His warning, to all nations and people, in every language. It is only after this that God’s wrath will be poured out in its full force upon the earth.

Isn’t it amazing that this angel will be finalizing the work of earthly evangelists in a perfect way? After the Rapture, every human being on earth, no matter where they are, will hear the gospel in a supernatural way in their own language. This angel will be the ultimate supernatural representative and ambassador of God’s heavenly Kingdom on earth. The Lord tells His disciples that the end shall not come until the

¹ Rev. 1:19.

² In Rev. 1-3 the Church of Christ is mentioned 22 times in the original text and then not again till Rev. 22:17.

³ In Rev. chapter 7 we see a large group of people who have washed their clothes. This makes one think of the foolish virgins, who lacked oil at the crucial time.

⁴ Rev. 12.

⁵ Rev. 7.

⁶ As Rev. 7 first mentions these 144,000 and immediately after this mentions the great multitude of people still being saved during the tribulation, we suppose that these 144,000 Israelites also play an important role in calling the nations of the world to repent once more.

⁷ 2 Pet. 3:9.

⁸ Rev. 14:6.

gospel has been preached to the whole world. The finalization of this campaign will be in the hands of an Angel of God.

It is often understood that the Return of the Son of God will only happen after the moment that the earthly Church of Christ has preached the gospel to all nations. Many believe that the Bible has to be first translated into every language as a condition before the Rapture or His Return can take place. But the Bible doesn't connect this condition to the period before the Rapture of the Bride. Throughout the whole main book of *Wake Up*, we see that God's Plan for Salvation has been precisely appointed since the beginning. God has determined the times and Jesus Christ is the Aleph and the Tav, the Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher¹ of this Plan.

Conclusion: Both the Rapture and the Return of Jesus Christ are not dependent on our human ability to reach every nation with the gospel, though we strongly encourage all believers to be part of His Great Commission! An angel of God will finish the work perfectly, after the Bride is raptured and before Jesus Christ returns as King.² Once again, this doesn't mean that we no longer take the preaching of the gospel seriously. On the contrary, we want to wake up and encourage a church that is falling asleep!

A Door is Opened for John

After the urgent messages to the seven end time churches³ who are being called to overcome in order to receive their reward, John is called in a vision to come to an open door in Heaven. This open door appears right before the start of the Great Tribulation. Isn't this a prophetic picture of the Bride being raptured, of the open door that is also reserved for the faithful church of Philadelphia?⁴ At the end of the Book of Revelation, we see Heaven open again, but then Jesus Christ comes from Heaven, followed by an army (His Bride who is now in full unity with the King) who is then with Him in Heaven. If the Bride comes out through heavens' door, didn't she go in through that first open door? There is no other way. Some scholars suggest that this army is only composed of angels. We disagree, as the Word states clearly

1 Some translations state that Jesus is the 'Pioneer and Perfecter' of our faith, therefore obscuring the meaning. Unintentionally the link with the aleph and tav, the beginning and the end has been obscured.

2 We read that God in fact sends 3 angels, each with their own assignment, before the final phase of His judgement commences. Rev. 14:6-13.

3 See again Rev. chapters 2 and 3.

4 See Rev. 3:8,4:1.

that those who come with him are “called and chosen and faithful.” This definition once again refers to the Bride.¹

John is called to climb up to heaven and go through that door. The same words “Climb up here!” are also spoken after the two witnesses are resurrected in Jerusalem and are taken by God into heaven.² From the description of the Feast of Trumpets in the main book, we know that the Jews teach that from that day *Heaven is open until the Day of Atonement*. In other words, from the Rapture of the Bride until the Return of the King of kings. The first and the last door are exactly parallel to this!

Conclusion: During this period of the open door there will be several harvests of people taken into Heaven. Further explanation can be found in the main book.

No Rapture at the Return

We have said before: If the Rapture of the Bride were to take place at the end of the Great Tribulation, then it would be directly followed by the Return. But in Revelation 19, where the Return is described, there is nothing written about the Rapture. This is remarkable because the Rapture is the most significant event after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the Rapture involves many millions of members of His ecclesia, those of previous generations as well as those from that last generation.³ Such an event deserves attention, but the reason that this is not mentioned in Chapter 19 is, of course, that chronologically this Rapture doesn’t take place there, directly before the Return.⁴

The Return takes place after the Bride enters into the Marriage covenant in Heaven, and after her Wedding week.

We return to the army that follows Jesus Christ when He returns to the earth. This is not a normal army. Above, we explained that it is made up of all the saints from all generations clothed in fine linen, white and clean,⁵ the symbol of the believers that

¹ See Rev. 17:14.

² Rev. 11:12.

³ The Bride consists of members of the Body of Christ that are at that time alive, as well as the believers who have died in Christ. See I Thess. 4:13 etc.

⁴ Also Zech. 14 shows a prophetic view of the Return of Jesus Christ as King. The Rapture is not mentioned.

⁵ Rev. 19:14.

are part of the Bride¹. Paul also confirms that they will appear with Christ² and the prophet Zechariah mentions explicitly³ that He will return to the Mount of Olives. Not only does Jesus Christ 'transform' from a Bridegroom into a King at the end of the Wedding; the Bride is also transformed. And she changes into an army.

When Jesus says that He will go to Heaven to prepare a place for His disciples in His Father's house, He promises to take them there with Him. He only comes at that moment for the Church of Christ, His Bride, to take her where He is, to His Father's House⁴. There the Bride will first appear with the Bridegroom under the chupah to enter into the Marriage covenant. It can be anticipated that His Bride will be further strengthened and transformed from glory to glory, while being in His loving presence. No doubt she will be radiating when at the end of the week, the Marriage supper will be held.

Conclusion: Again, within the context of the Biblical feasts it is not possible that He would come to take the Bride if the Return is to follow immediately. His appearance at the Return is equal to the Jewish Wedding ceremony, a ceremony our Lord explicitly referred to a number of times while on earth. As we understood earlier, this appearance of Bride and Bridegroom only takes place after the wedding week, that is in this context: after seven years of tribulation will have taken place 'for those who dwell on earth' while at the same time Bride and Bridegroom have been fulfilling their week, dwelling in heaven.

The Restrainer has to be removed

We now look at an important clue for the timing of the Rapture of the Bride. Paul says⁵ that the lawlessness is already secretly at work in the world around us. But it can only be fully revealed when the one, who restrains the lawless one, will be taken away⁶. Or if translated differently, when nothing stands in the way of the lawless one. This also teaches us more about the timing of the Rapture of the Bride, because it is a condition that has to be met before the appearance of the antichrist. The appearance of the

1 This is not an army of angels, for Rev. 19:8 states that the fine white linen are the righteous deeds of the saints. The Bride is clothed with this fine white linen. See also what was stated above regarding Rev. 17:14 : these faithful are believers, not angels.

2 Col. 3:4.

3 Zech. 14:4. See Acts 1:11, confirming that location also.

4 John 14:2-3.

5 II Thess. 2:6 etc.

6 See the complete Jewish Bible (Stern). This separation from the Torah is already secretly at work, but it will be at work in secret until the one who restrains is out of the way. It's not about earthly laws, but to be without God's Torah, God's Word. The lawless one is therefore completely against the Instruction of God.

antichrist on the public stage will immediately be the start of the last seven years. In the Hebrew translation it says emphatically that this lawless one is restrained, so he can only be revealed “in his own time”, in the appointed time for him.¹

In biblical literature, there are a number of theories about the restrainer. He could be a Roman emperor or human government or the Archangel Gabriel or the Church of Christ or the Holy Spirit. We think that believers should see themselves as the *Spirit-filled* Bride, walking in His authority and power and being that precious salt of the earth preventing decay. Thus, collectively and in the power of the Holy Spirit, these believers are the Restrainer. If the Holy Spirit would also be taken away from the earth at that time, then God’s work of salvation can no longer function on the earth. It is indeed the Holy Spirit that convicts people of sin and of righteousness. Many will come to believe in Jesus Christ only *after* the Rapture of the Church of Christ. Let’s not forget that God’s Spirit will also inspire the 144,000 and the two witnesses that are mentioned in the Book of Revelation. The repentant sinners as well as the lukewarm believers, the “foolish virgins” who remain behind after the Rapture, will suddenly come to the realization that they have missed their preparation for the Great Wedding. They all will really need the help of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, after they have (re)turned to the God of the Bible. For many it will be very sad to now realize what an important position the Church of Christ had on the earth and how little they understood her function. It is possible that even the Bride will not fully see, until after the Rapture, what kind of an obstacle she has been for Satan all that time. We suspect that she will also see how she has underestimated her God given position. The condition for the revelation of the antichrist teaches us much about the timing of the Rapture.

Paul explains in 2 Thess. 2:6 that the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but that the one who now restrains it will continue until he is taken out of the way. Then the man of lawlessness (the antichrist) will be revealed. Paul is addressing the issue because of a false letter being circulated in the church since the time he wrote his first letter to them. This false letter states that the Day of the Lord has come. In our time we would call this “fake news”. In trying to comfort them that the Day of the Lord has not come yet, he speaks of events that must come before the Day of the Lord. His speech leaves some room for interpretation, since the Restrainer is mentioned as a neuter and as masculine in the same verse.² Daniel Matson studied this and he also sees the Restrainer as the

¹ See the Complete Jewish Bible of David H. Stern.

² This is caused by the fact that Paul switches the gender of the restrainer in this article from the neuter (v.6 - to katexon) to the masculine (v.7 - o katexwn).

Holy Spirit's power through the Church on earth, to hold back the Antichrist that will be ready to use the lawlessness of this age to his advantage. This Spirit filled Bride is opposed to and holding back the revelation of this evil Antichrist. Paul tells the believers that the day of the Lord will not come unless 1) the *apostasia* comes first and 2) the man of sin is revealed. Most translations translate the Greek word *apostasia* as "falling away" or "apostasy", meaning that lot of believers shall leave the Church before the Day of the Lord. But Matson explains that *apostasia* can very well mean "departure" and this interpretation is indeed very logical in the context of the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians. In the second chapter of his letter the Restrainer seems to be logically connected with a "departure" and with the coming of the antichrist.¹

The sequence of God's feasts as a shadow of the future

In several chapters of the main book, we write about the remarkable meanings of God's feasts. We only want to summarize briefly here and repeat the most important elements in order to show that the sequence of the feasts refers to a Rapture.

The seven feasts and the Sabbath that God commanded Moses to celebrate are feasts that have prophetic meanings. At the same time, they refer to God's total Plan of Salvation for the world. The three spring feasts² were prophetic feasts that received their exact fulfillment when Jesus Christ came on the earth for the first time. Jesus fulfilled these feasts on the day and the hour, showing that the Old Testament prophecies linked to these feasts were accurate promises from God. The fourth feast, The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), was fulfilled after Jesus ascended to Heaven. On the 10th day after His ascension, He sent His Holy Spirit on the Biblical Feast of Weeks. Once again, this feast was fulfilled exactly on the day of the shadow feast. God chose to let His glory return into temples of men and not in the temple of stone. In Israel, a dry summer without any feasts (a physical season in the natural) follows these four spring feasts. In much the same way, but in a spiritual sense, a long dry period took place for the Church of Christ³ after that special day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out onto the disciples. When the Church fell into anti-Semitism, God rarely spoke to a backslidden church and millions of believers had no access to the Bible. Needless to say that for many, there was very little biblical insight. As a result, the Bible became a veiled Book as the work of men replaced original truths.

¹ For further study: watchfortheday.org/restrainer.html. Other authors, like J. Dieleman share the same insight.

² Pesach, Unleavened Bread and the Feast of First-fruits.

³ In this context, the Reformation can be compared to a first shower rain that starts to prepare the dry, hard soil for a future harvest to come.

The month before the fall feasts, the month of Elul, is a month of return and reflection. Prophetically speaking, we are now in this period in human history. In the period after the Reformation, and certainly during the previous century, we have seen a return to the Bible and the pure gospel in some churches and nations. Every year at the end of the month of Elul, the fruits in the fields of Israel are fully ripe for the harvest. May the spiritual reality in Christ follow soon!

The three fall feasts are awaiting their prophetic fulfillment around the Return of Jesus Christ. We have already shown in the main book how the Feast of Trumpets is all about three themes: The resurrection of the dead, the Wedding of the Messiah, and the Crowning of the King. Paul refers to this feast when he speaks about the Rapture at the last trumpet¹, the trumpet that belongs to the Feast of Trumpets. Between the end of this feast (Tishri 2) and the start of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur starts on the eve of Tishri 9) are the characteristic “7 full days.”² The Day of Atonement will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns to the Mount of Olives. Shortly after this event, the Feast of Tabernacles takes place. During that great feast His ecclesia and God’s Israel in their midst will celebrate that Jesus Christ dwells with them as King forever. This is the fulfillment of the start of the Millennium. First He came at the Feast of Tabernacles to dwell among us, as the main book documents, and in the near future He will do so again. Then the circle of the biblical feasts will be complete. This all is so wonderful. It is so important to not neglect the sequence of these God-given feasts.

Typologies

The Bible is not just a book of interesting stories. Many events in the Bible are considered true, even by non-believing archeologists and other scientists. In the original Hebrew texts, God placed “textual DNA” to ensure there would be no doubt that He Himself inspired the Bible. The main book shows some interesting proof. His divine signature warns us to make sure that not one jot or tittle is changed in this text³. At the same time, the greatness of God is made clear in other ways as well. Many stories and events have also a typological value in addition to their factual and historical value.

¹ Called the “Tekiah Gedola”.

² In the main book we wrote that nobody knows ‘the day nor the hour’ of this feast, that can start on one of two days, depending on the visibility of the new moon. Because of this, the intermittent period until the Day of Atonement is at least 7 days, but it can also be maximum 8 days. ‘Always be ready for the Bridegroom’ is the central message.

³ Matt. 5:18-19.

True historical events can foreshadow events in the future. The story of Joseph and his brothers is, as well as being a true historic event, a type representing Jesus and the people of Israel. It also is a type that shows how Israel, at a certain point in the future, will recognize Jesus Christ as Yeshua Ha Messiach, Who came and will return for His people.

Moses descended twice from the mountain as a type of Christ, the latter exactly on the Day of Atonement as well!

Moses, when he led the people from Egypt and twice descended from Mount Sinai to the camp of the people, was also a type of the Messiah.¹ This picture is intended to remind us of Christ, who has already come to Israel once, and will do this again on a future Day of Atonement. This book isn't large enough to explain every typology found in the Bible, but we would like to give some attention to the story of Enoch, which is not so well-known.

Enoch and the rapture before the flood

Historically, Enoch lived before Noah and the flood. Inhabitants of the earth lived to be very old in the ecosystem of that time, according to the Bible. Adam lived 930 years, Methuselah lived 969 years, and Noah 950 years. Enoch lived “only” 365 years on earth. His story is very interesting.

We read little about Enoch in Genesis, but we know that he was righteous and walked with God.² Suddenly, he was no longer on earth for God took Enoch away. The “Book of Enoch” is a book that did not become part of the Bible, but was highly honored until the 7th century. And still today, it is considered to be truthful by many rabbis. Although today this book is not considered part of the Western³ Canon of the Bible, it gives valuable insight in the information about Enoch that was available in the first centuries. It is kind of a magnifying glass for the short description about Enoch in Genesis, but is completely in line with what is told about him. In the New Testament, the apostle Jude even refers⁴ in his letter to the Book of Enoch with

1 The second time Moses descended from the mountain was exactly on the Day of Atonement, the same day that Jesus Christ will also return to Jerusalem to establish God's Law and Government on earth.

2 In line with the Bible (NKJ) stating that Enoch lived intimately with God, the book of Enoch mentions that God really walked with Enoch.

3 We have to realize that the Syrian, Coptic or Ethiopian Churches have a slightly different canon. The book of Enoch is for example part of the Ethiopian Canon.

4 Jude 1:14. Jude speaks about fallen angels that have to be locked up. This information cannot be found in the rest of the Bible, but it comes literally from the book of Enoch, like a few other things mentioned in Jude's letter.

information not found elsewhere in the Bible, but which is mentioned in that book. Although we cannot confirm that the whole book is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is clear that the Book of Enoch was available to be studied and cited¹ during the time of the apostles. Apparently the disciples and the apostle Paul greatly valued this book in their days.

Who was Enoch?

According to the Book of Enoch, Enoch was a mighty king over 130 rulers and had received much wisdom from God. During his time as king there was peace.² Although he was king, the Book of Jasher describes that he often withdrew for long periods of time to be in the presence of God.

Samuel and Joshua refer to the Book of Jasher;
Judas refers to the Book of Enoch.

Many scholars see Enoch as a type of the Bride of Jesus Christ. The inhabitants of the earth got very old before the flood, which means that many generations were alive at the same time. The first human being, Adam, died in the year that Enoch had already been king for 243 years. Imagine, Adam telling Enoch stories of the Garden of Eden. Also, Enoch lived in the time of Noah. Then God took Enoch away from the earth at a certain moment, without dying, and before the tribulation of the flood came upon the earth. Compared with his peers and forefathers, Enoch was very young when he was taken away. However, there was a reason for this.

When Noah entered into the ark with his family, God had determined that there were no longer any believers on the earth. When we study the history of that time, we can conclude that there were ten generations from Adam to Noah, over a period of about 1658 years. After Enoch was taken, a longsuffering God gave Noah the command to warn people for another 120 years, to tell them to swiftly turn back to God. God also gave Noah the task of building an ark, for in the period before the flood, mankind had become so corrupt and sinful that God decided to end that world. We are only in Genesis 6 and mankind was already seriously perverted! What happened?

¹ From the Dead-sea scrolls we learn that the book of Enoch was considered to be "holy". Also in the letter of Barnabas there is reference to the book of Enoch (16:4). Many early church fathers, like Tertullianus (see translations 'The cultufoeminarum' I, 3 and also 'The Idolatria' XV), Justin the Martyr, Irenaeus (see 'Adversus haereses' IV,16,2) and finally also Origenes, believed the book to be authentic.

² Book of Jasher 3:10 etc.

Noah lived in a very demonic world with all kinds of forbidden magical rituals and knowledge. Through the letter of Jude, we can derive that this knowledge had become known to mankind through the fallen angels. The question remains how it was possible that only one family remained to serve God sincerely. The answer is not found in our Bible¹. But outside our Western Canon of the Bible there are other books of great value. There is, for example, the Book of Jasher. Joshua and Samuel² refer specifically to this book in their biblical accounts. We will not consider this book to be part of the Bible, but it does give us additional information about that period in time. Studying this book teaches indeed that all other true believers were already gone from the earth before the flood came. The Book of Jasher states this fact, which is nowhere refuted by the Bible³:

everyone who followed the Lord died in those days, before they saw the evil that God unleashed on the earth. (*transl.*)

God took care that these believers would not have to die in the flood. Only Enoch was taken without dying, while Noah and his family were saved by the ark. God wanted Noah to carry on his Name on the earth. At that time, the Noah's family represented God's people on the earth. His task was to be the steward of God's Creation. Noah wasn't planning to marry and have children in those days. But according to the Book of Jasher⁴, God had a different plan and instructed Noah to marry. Unlike a corrupt and sinful world, God wanted to continue His ways with mankind, through Noah and his offspring. When Noah was 498 years old, he married Enoch's daughter,⁵ and by the time he was 502 years old, he had three sons with her.

In the Book of Jasher it is written that Noah and Methuselah were both preaching the Word of God to the people, day after day, for 120 years. But it also states that the people didn't want to listen and remained stiff-necked and disobedient.⁶ Just before the flood, Methuselah finally died, before God brought evil upon the world as

1 Today's Western Canon of books was chosen in the 4th century AD. The Ethiopian Orthodox Bible has additional (for us apocryphal) books and was hardly influenced by the Roman Catholic Church.

2 In 1840 a Hebrew scroll was found, and it turned out to be the Book of Jasher. The Bible refers to this book in Joshua 10:13 and II Sam. 1:18. Therefore we can give this book some additional value, because in the time of Joshua and Samuel it had an official status.

3 The Bible shows time and again that God spares His own. See Mal. 3:16-18. See also the Book of Jasher 5:5.

4 Book of Jasher 5:12.

5 Noah married Naamah, daughter of Enoch. She was 580 years old. See the Book of Jasher 5:15-16.

6 Book of Jasher 5: 9-10.

He had announced¹. In Hebrew Methuselah means: “*it will happen after him*”. Maybe people knew the meaning of Methuselah, *but they forgot to be watchful*. Methuselah lived to be 969 years old, much older than anyone who had lived on earth. There are indications that Noah entered the ark² immediately after the death of Methuselah. Isn’t it amazing that God gave Methuselah his name 969 years before the flood? Was His Plan already appointed? It would seem so, although this long period of grace shows God’s great patience!³

Methuselah means “It will happen after him,”
and things indeed happened exactly so.

After the death of Methuselah, only Noah and his family were left. Why Enoch didn’t die naturally seems a mystery, until we read in the Book of Jasher that God asks him to reign with Him over the angels, as he also reigned over men. To us, this might seem somewhat strange. But it is remarkable that the Book of Jasher mentions this, for it is an exact shadow of the position of the Bride. For Paul writes “that we will judge over the angels”⁴, although he could not have found any reference to this in the Old Testament as we know it. Enoch was taken in the blink of an eye. This is the shadow of the event awaiting the Bride before the Great Tribulation. Can it be that Noah and his family were the picture of that part of the people of Israel⁵ that He will lead through the all engulfing events of the Great Tribulation, to reign with Him over the earth?

The story of Enoch is placed into this e-book to illustrate that the books of Enoch and Jasher show the same pattern of God’s Plan of Salvation, although these books are less known and were not taken into consideration when putting together the Western Canon. But the Bible does refer to them and some other books.⁶

Conclusion: many centuries ago these books testified, in accordance with the Scriptures, to the fact that God acts differently with those who obey Him. Enoch was

¹ Book of Jasher 5:21.

² According to the Masoretic text of the Jewish Tenach and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

³ In His lovingkindness, He delays judgment and wrath.

⁴ I Cor. 6:3.

⁵ That part of Israel that doesn’t belong to the Bride, but who consider themselves under the everlasting covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob while clinging to the old covenants.

⁶ There is also the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, referred to in Numb. 21:14-15, the Book of Shemaiah and of the seer Iddo (II Chron. 12:15), the Book of the prophet Nathan (I Chron. 29:29, II Chron. 9:29), the Book of Gad. (I Chron. 29:29), the Acts of Solomon (I Chron. 11:41). Most of these books – except their titles – have been lost in time. The Book of Chronicles names many more books.

raptured and he is clearly a forerunner of the Bride. God saved him in a supernatural way before His all engulfing judgment of the Flood and it won't be any different with the faithful Church of Christ, the Bride that will not be judged during the Great Tribulation.

The Syrian-Orthodox tradition

The time of the antichrist is called “i qi’amtho” in Aramaic. A well-known proverb within the Syrian-Orthodox church says, “As long as there is one single good disciple in this world, the i qi’amtho cannot start.” This might make you think that all the believers will have to be dead before the antichrist comes, but the meaning behind this saying can very well be indicate the taking away of the good disciples from the earth! So when we ask the question, “When will the qi’amtho take place?,” then the answer is, “After all those that God considers good followers have been taken away and no longer live on earth!”

This is also a beautiful parallel with Enoch, for he had to be taken away before the flood came. Remember, in those days, at the age of 365 he was far too young to die a natural death. God took two paths in the end-times of those days, one with Noah and one with Enoch. Noah was predestined to continue God's Name on earth. Noah went with his family in the ark and God protected Noah through the flood, although it wasn't an easy “sail on smooth waters.” Children's Bibles have romanticized this story, but the Book of Jasher gives an interesting view of their stay in the ark. Although they were safe, there was a terrible panic amongst the animals in the ark and Noah prayed in great fear to God¹. The powers of the elements had such an impact on the ark that the ark *almost* perished. God heard Noah and stopped the deluge and the waterspouts of the earth, after which the water became calm.

Here again we see a remarkable parallel with the story in the Book of Revelation, where the serpent (Satan) spewed out of his mouth a stream of water like a flood at the woman (Israel) to carry her away. But the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood before Israel could be destroyed². It is fascinating to see the parallel between Noah and Israel. When the time of Great Tribulation starts, God will deal with scores of people who have continually denied Him. The remnant of Israel of that last generation, that has not yet recognized God's Messiah will be piloted through this period, but that doesn't mean it will be an easy journey. The Bible describes this period as “the time of Jacob's trouble.” And it is very well possible that this trouble

¹ Book of Jasher 6:30, etc.

² Rev. 12:15.

comes on the remnant of all tribes, wherever they live. Israel and Jerusalem will almost be destroyed in this last attempt of Satan, because he knows that Israel is God's key for the future. The same, Noah was also God's key for the rebuilding of the earth after the flood. In their great fear, the remnant of Israel will call upon God and He will cover and protect them and all of humanity will see His intervention. The story from the Book of Jasher is fascinating, complementary, and completely in line with the Bible. Because of the referral to this book in the Bible books of Joshua and Samuel, its valuable information should not be neglected. Some wonder why the Church of Christ has to be raptured, while a part of Israel will have to go through this period of the Great Tribulation. It seems unfair because God should also fulfill His (older) Covenant with Israel. But that is exactly what God will do. The answer can be found in the picture of Noah and Enoch. God didn't take Noah away, because through him the earth would be rebuilt and he would reign over the earth. On the other hand, the flood could not come until Enoch was taken away, for Enoch was just and yet did not enter into the ark. Enoch was a foreshadowing of "the restrainer" and so God took him away. After the flood, Noah reigned over the earth and so will it be with repentant Israel. God has promised that the Law would come out of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem¹. It will be a time in which Israel will be restored as a nation of priests for the nations.

The flood did not come until Enoch was taken away

Jesus tells His disciples² that in the period before the Great Tribulation it will be "as in the days of Noah." It's an emphatic referral. Also in those days the world will be so corrupt and full of unrighteousness that God will come to try³ those who live on the earth.⁴ It will be a time of God's holy wrath⁵ where plagues will be used to finally deliver the earth from Satan. At the same time, the Pharaoh of this world will try to suppress the people of this world and he would be successful if God would not shorten these days. At the same time, even in those days there will still be a chance for people on the earth to turn to the God of the Bible.

Conclusion: In the time that Noah was in the ark during the flood, Enoch was already in heaven with God. Before the period of the Great Tribulation starts, Jesus Christ

¹ Isa. 2:3.

² Matt. 24:37.

³ In the midst of this, many will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 7:14.

⁴ Rev. 3:10.

⁵ Rev. 14:10, 16:19.

will take His bride into heaven, parallel to what happened with Enoch. God will take care of Israel, just as He did with Noah, for it's no coincidence that God's patterns as well as Jesus' explicit words refer to those days of Noah!

Lot and Sodom & Gomorrah

Also the stories of Lot and Rahab refer to a deeper meaning of the way God works. They truly happened in history and they are given a deeper meaning for us¹. God warned Lot in time, and he was brought into safety with his family, before God destroyed the city of Sodom. Jericho was destroyed, only after those who were to be saved were safely in the house of Rahab. God saved the house of Rahab from the judgment of Jericho². These stories are not types of Jesus Christ and His Church or of the position of Israel, but they do show how God cares for His chosen ones. Throughout the Bible we see time and again God's appointed time lines, patterns and methodology.

Isaiah and the rapture

From God's fixed time patterns and methodology, but also from the words of Jesus Christ, from the prophets and the apostles, we learn that the Old and New Testament should be looked upon as one. The New Covenant is in fact offered by God to, and renewed with, both houses of Israel. That is the same party as the Old Covenant. Both are offered to (obedient) Israel.³ Prophets like Ezekiel, Hosea, Daniel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and Isaiah all write about the end times in which we now live. Their prophecies make clear that the Old Testament is not just history, but also, His story about the future. The Word of God is one and it cannot be divided. The prophet Isaiah prophesied already in the 8th century BC about the future Millennium, and what would happen with the nations surrounding Israel. The same prophet, at this early time, was already referring to the Bride being raptured before the Great Tribulation, when he wrote:

*"With my soul I have desired You in the night,
yes by my spirit within me I will seek You early"⁴.*

¹ See 2 Tim. 3:16-17 and Josh. 2.

² Josh. 6:17.

³ See Jer. 31:33-37.

⁴ Isa. 26:9.

This desire in the night does not refer here to an ordinary bride and bridegroom, but to the Bride who expects the Bridegroom before midnight. Isaiah continues and writes:

“Your dead shall live, together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust.... Come, my people, enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”¹

Isaiah uses for the word “door” the Hebrew word “deleth” that also can be translated as the “doors of heaven.” Isaiah uses for the word “chambers” the Hebrew word “hadar” which means “bedroom” or the “innermost room” or also “the bridal-room,”² and at the same time, a place to hide!

While Isaiah prophetically described the end times approximately 2800 years ago, Jesus Christ appeals to His Bride in the same way, saying, “Come, close the gates of heaven behind you and hide yourself for a short time in the room of the Bridegroom, until the time of Indignation is over.”³ What a beautiful offer to stay for a short time in the innermost room and safe shelter, until the time of God’s holy wrath is over.

Conclusion: The Bride who is prepared, and the Church of Christ, where in every generation including that last one His judgment started first, and who has been purified and sanctified, will not have to go through this period of Wrath.

The Purpose of the Rapture before the Great Tribulation

We would like to study the purpose of this awful period on the earth from another perspective. It sickens some believers to think that a loving God can also be angry. The reason they find this difficult to believe is that many have created an image of God that fits within their Western theology, which says that God wants the best for us. Wrath doesn’t fit in this image (anymore). But the same God is Creator of heaven and earth. He has been patient with His creation. He has started over again and forgiven, He has brought order into chaos, and through His Son He has continually

1 Isa. 26:19.

2 The same word is used for the chamber of the bridegroom in Joel 2:16!

3 Isa. 26:20-21: what the Lord says to His people of Israel is also true for those that are no longer strangers, but fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God, being fellow heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promises in Christ by the gospel. Eph. 2:19,3:6

offered a road of reconciliation and redemption. But this God of love is also a holy God who will not continue to ignore the sin and rebellion of men. God has been merciful in His Plan. Man has been free to choose to listen to whom he wanted to. But there will come a moment when God will finalize His eternal Plan of Salvation and He will take away the sting of all evil. The time of the roaring lion is coming to an end because God has appointed an end to this time. The picture of the Great Tribulation is confusing for many, because different powers appear on the scene at the same time. But it is easier to understand if you look at this from the perspective of the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Conclusion: God had to bring the plagues in order to make Pharaoh release His people. One more greater Exodus will be needed to redeem the world and the people from the current ruler of this world. ¹

In the next paragraph we would like to look at the different main reasons for this last period of the Great Tribulation. It will again make clear why the Bride will not be present during this period.

Satan will try to possess the earth

In the first half of the last 'week' of 7 years, the antichrist will try to restore world peace by performing 'great signs' and (false) miracles. He will want to reign as an impressive deity by doing this. At the same time, he will also experience resistance from the two witnesses² who will warn people about him in Jerusalem.³ He will be angry that many believers who were lukewarm before the Rapture will still decide to follow Jesus Christ as their Messiah. In the first half of the Great Tribulation he will therefore perfect a few control mechanisms to oppress and even suppress humanity. Revelation 13 refers to this as the mark of the Beast, signified by the number "666." Nobody will be able to buy or sell without this mark.

In our Internet age, such a control mechanism is easier to establish than ever before. Those who do not believe in the Bible or the biblical prophecies can still agree that such worldwide control mechanisms are possible in our generation. We can no longer escape them, as it seems. It is already at our doorstep. Whoever controls the worldwide web, will also control all businesses, governments, banks, data and even

¹ See also what the main book has to say in the third chapter about the statue of Daniel 2 and the way the adversary has tried to consolidate his grip on all nations.

² Scholars think that these could possibly be Elia and Enoch, because they didn't die but were raptured.

³ Rev. 11.

people's social lives. When we consider how everything will soon be "in the cloud,"¹ we see that people who do not choose to participate, will not be able to buy or sell anything. Media communications continue to warn us that our privacy is being trampled on by governments and by some major companies, and most citizens are no longer even shocked by this. Following this line of conditioning, the grip of governments, worldwide and regional institutions as well as of a whole number of transnational companies will become increasingly stronger on every human being. Now this is often experienced as violation, but as time goes on, it will be inextricably linked to the idea of "safety" and the ability to trade. All these "subtle" violations will be promoted and gain acceptance in this way. The speed in which this is already becoming true in our own time is not only a strong indication that these prophesied developments will soon be reality, but they also indicate that the end time events connected to these developments are also on the verge of happening. The developments in the world around us, along with the prophecies, are a barometer for the time the Bible foretells. And even for unbelievers, these current developments can even be a touchstone since they were predicted many centuries ago.

In short: The first half of the last seven years before the Return of Jesus Christ, will be a time when Satan tries to hinder God's plan to gain total rule. The many secret sects, that are already under the rule of Satan, hope for this scenario. They believe in the coming of a "new age," but many expect that when that time comes, the situation will be changed into a Luciferian "New Age" period. According to these sects, chaos and destruction are part of a necessary preparation that has to happen before the "new time" can start. Not every financial crisis is a sign of the end times, but serious monetary and economic crisis (together with the increase in severe natural phenomena and wars) are also signs of the end times. In those days there will be one final attempt to come to a one-world government under the antichrist and a one-world religion, under the false prophet². This will become possible when the conquering Church of Jesus Christ (the restrainer) is no longer on earth to prevent it. Satan will be enabled to attain some victories over the saints that are left behind.³

1 "In the cloud" means that information of people or governments is no longer saved only on personal computers, but "somewhere" central on the internet. Only through the internet you will be able to access your information.

2 Rev. 17.

3 Dan. 7:21-22. From verse 20 it is clear that the 'horn that has eyes' also speaks of this attempt to gain worldwide absolute control. We have arrived here in the 70th week of Dan. 9:24 during which those that choose to not follow the antichrist, either from the tribes of Israel or from the Gentiles, will be severely persecuted and many of them will be killed. The 'horn that has eyes' will prevail against those saints *until* the Ancient of days comes ...

Is God's wrath fair?

When the times of the Gentiles will be completed, soon the Day of the Lord will also come, the day of God's holy wrath. As mentioned, the latter doesn't fit in the image of God's character in many Christian circles. However, when we take some distance and look at the history of Adam, then we see that people again and again have rebelled against God and turned away from Him. The flood came and God started over with Noah. Shortly thereafter, humanity again became rebellious. After about 4000 years God sent His Own Son to deliver the slaves of rebellion. Through Jesus Christ, a new Covenant was established with the house of Judah and the house of Israel, a Covenant that also invited Gentiles to enter in. This was not an "alternative solution," but an eternal plan¹, as we have established in the main book.

After another 2000 years, despite God's grace and the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ being preached to many nations, most of humanity still doesn't want to believe in Him. In fact, they stay under the suppressing authority and power of the Pharaoh of this world. This period will come to an end, but not before God has finished His Plan of Salvation. In the main book we discuss in the chapter on the Timelines that God sovereignly determines all the phases of His appointed Plan. When all human efforts have ceased, a longsuffering God will send an angel to bring the eternal gospel to the whole of humanity one last time. But for a short while, He will also allow people to experience what it is to live in a world where Satan seems to have the complete authority, without the hindering presence of the Bride that walks in the power of the Holy Spirit. He will test the unbelieving inhabitants of this world and all the lukewarm believers who have remained behind.²

Conclusion: When the enemy declares himself to be god and defiles the temple in Jerusalem³, and when the people keep on willfully sinning⁴ despite the severe warnings of His angels and His ongoing judgments, only then will the full impact of God's holy wrath be revealed⁵.

1 Eph. 3:11, the eternal purpose. The Hebrew Stern translation states: the age-old purpose.

2 Rev. 3:10. Let's not forget that He judges His church *before* the world will be judged during that last week of seven years.

3 If the Return of Christ will be on a Day of Atonement we can count back 3 ½ years and come to the period of Pesach, when the Pesach sacrifice will be offered in the temple.

4 See the shocking text in Rev. 9:20-21.

5 Dan. 9:27 and 12:11. This temple will not be built according to God's Times and instructions, but it will be done prematurely by a group of Jews who erroneously believe that the Messiah has come. The 'coming of the Messiah' is the signal to start building the temple, but later on it becomes clear that this was not the Messiah but the antichrist.

God's purpose with Israel

In the books of Ezekiel and Revelation another purpose of the Great Tribulation is written, a purpose that has to do with His Israel.

On the first Pentecost after the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit was poured out. His coming started a period that is often called the “Age of Grace” or the “Age of the Church of Christ.”¹ God had appointed in His Times and Salvation Plan that He would make one nation and one Body in every generation from born-again Jews and Gentiles. He called Messianic Israelites and Gentiles to be one new man in Christ Jesus. Soon after this Pentecost, the people of Israel were again dispersed over the whole world, starting from 70 AD. The apostles, however, understood that a time would come when the people of Israel would be restored, and that in that process He would also restore the tabernacle of David that had fallen². When that time comes, God will sanctify His Name as “the God of Israel” among all the nations of the world, for He will defend the nation of Israel and the remnant³ of Israel. This remnant will repent and recognize that Yeshua has been their Messiah for 2000 years already. What a day that will be!

Therefore, another important purpose of the Great Tribulation is to sanctify His name and to graft the broken off natural branches of the True Olive tree back on again. God will use the time of Jacob's trouble to bring back that part of Israel which the Bible speaks of, a part that doesn't yet believe in Yeshua Ha Massiach. During this time they will repent and call out to their God.⁴

God will show the world that He has not broken His Covenant(s) with His people and that this was an everlasting Covenant.⁵ First a tremendous pressure will be put upon this small nation, especially when all the nations gather to divide Jerusalem. Satan will come to deceive Israel with one purpose: To annihilate it.

1 It is not the age of the Institutional Church as an organization. The Church of Christ consists of Jews and non-Jews who believe in Jesus Christ and that form His Body ever since that Day of Pentecost. See 1 Thess. 2:14, 1 Cor. 12:13.

2 Acts 15:15-16.

3 Also in Israel many will die in the Great Tribulation, and only a remnant will be left. Even now there are many in Israel that don't believe in the God of the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Hopefully those who will be alive in those days will listen to the 144,000 Israelites or to the Angel of Rev. 14:6.

4 Zech. 12:10-14.

5 See Jer. 31:35-40. Israel remains a nation before God and He will not cast off all her seed. In fact, Eph. 2:12 speaks of 'the covenants of promise'. In the years to come the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants will come to fulfilment in combination with the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion: God will allow these trials of the nation for an allotted time, with the intention that Israel¹ will call upon their true Messiah and He will save them.

The remnant of Israel will recognize that Yeshua Ha Mashiach has also been their Messiah for the last 2000 years

The story of Joseph and his brothers plays an important role as a shadow in this context. When the brothers appear before the ruler of Egypt, Joseph finally makes himself known to them. This happens at the moment that Judah (in all his distress) guarantees the safety of Benjamin when the cup was found with him, and that he and the other brothers are willing to become slaves to save Benjamin. Only then do they see that their savior in the famine is really their own brother. Likewise, we see in our time that the distress of Judah is increasing more and more. May he soon meet his Savior!

Nowhere in the Bible do we see that the Bride of Jesus Christ plays an active role on earth in God's multipurpose goal for this tribulation period². We have understood earlier that during this same period of seven years, the covenant that was established 2000 years ago during the last Seder-meal before His crucifixion will be finalized and fulfilled into a marriage covenant in the Bridal room in the House of the Father. In the meantime, the Bride of many generations is tested and tried during her period on earth. In every generation also, judgment has started in the Church of Christ, including God's choice who belongs to the Bride. Every generation of those who belong to the Bride has made itself ready to meet the Bridegroom, and during this whole period of many centuries the Bride has been the continual object of Satanic attack. The many dark periods in church history make this clear. After trials and refining, the Bride³ of all generations will finally be able to appear before Him without spot or wrinkle. As soon as the Bride is taken away, the war of Satan will move towards the tribes of Israel still on earth. A special focus will be put on the nation of Israel in the region of the Middle East. For Satan knows that the destruction of the remaining people of Israel (and also of the nation) will hinder the completion of God's plan with Israel. Therefore, he will focus all his powers (in vain) on this

¹ The definition of Israel: here we speak of the part of Israel that belongs to the broken-off branches. See Rom. 11

² That is to say: a) stop the Evil one on earth, b) wrath of God over a consciously and permanently rebelling humanity, c) grafting again the broken-off branches and d) God showing His everlasting faithfulness to His established Covenants.

³ We repeat: the Bride only consists of those who have prepared themselves for the moment of the Rapture as well as the believers of the previous generations who prepared themselves during their lives but have already died in Christ beforehand. 1 Thess. 4:16-17

goal. Fortunately, the old prophecies¹ have foretold, that during the Millennium, the world will not be ruled by him but by the Lord of lords sitting on the Throne of David in Jerusalem.

In these days Satan will also focus on those who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior after the Rapture. Amongst them, many will have attended church before the Rapture, but they never wanted to accept the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ in their lives and live accordingly. Together with the believers whose clothes were stained, they will turn in repentance to Him. Most likely many millions of unbelievers will come to believe in Jesus Christ after the 144,000 have fulfilled their role, followed by the angel of the Lord who will have preached the eternal gospel in all the corners of the earth. The angel will proclaim to every nation, in every language, the need to repent and to worship God.² The many that are added will be before His throne!³

Problem with Israel on earth

When Israel goes through the Great Tribulation, why doesn't the Bride have to go through it as well? This is often difficult for Messianic churches to understand. On one hand, they are genetically part of Israel, and on the other hand, they are spiritually part of the Bride. The Bible shows two separate ways, one for the Bride and one for the part of Israel that held on to the older Covenant⁴. But these ways will come together at the beginning of the Millennium. All believers from Israel, from every generation, who died in Christ will be part of the Bride⁵. Others, from the tribes of Israel, who are living in that last generation, will receive a specific task on earth during the Great Tribulation.⁶ According to the prophecy of Daniel⁷, God has reserved one last year-week of seven years to finalize things with Israel⁸, after which, the people of Israel will recognize their Messiah and will reign with Him in the Millennium. But first God will make Jerusalem a "cup of drunkenness" for the rebelling nations around

¹ See Isa. 2:1-5, Zech. 14:16 etc.

² Rev. 14:6.

³ Rev. 7:9.

⁴ Or maybe neglected the older Covenant.

⁵ The Bible shows in Revelation 7 that there will be 144.000 from **all** the tribes of Israel that receive a special position and assignment. See earlier.

⁶ Rev. 7:1-8.

⁷ A literal period of 7 years, see Daniel 9:24 and the timelines (Chapter 3) in the main book, belonging to this week of years.

⁸ God tells Daniel that this last period is to finish the transgression, to make an end to sin, to reconcile iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy. (Daniel 9:24). While preterism in essence holds the view¹ that all has been fulfilled in 70 AD², all these key elements of verse 24 have not yet become reality yet!

her, and the city will be made into “a stone that all the nations have to carry.” In their rebellion, they will continue to look for other “solutions” but they will seriously hurt themselves in the process.¹ Eventually Israel, along with Jerusalem, will become the ruling center of the world where all nations will go to.² As mentioned before, Israel will be restored as a nation of priests for all the nations.

Ezekiel: through Israel God will sanctify His Name
amongst the nations

Conclusion: The group that is present at the taking away of the Bride will consist of the Israel of God, the ones who have accepted and followed Jesus Christ as their Messiah, along with Messianic believers from the Gentiles. Paul explained to the Galatians that not only Jews, but also non-Jews become children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ.³ That last generation that will be alive when the Bridegroom comes is only a small part, because for the most part the Bride will consist of all the sincere followers who have already died in Him.⁴ The Scriptures also give us an order, as Paul indicates that at the Rapture, the graves will be opened, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.⁵ But once all are gathered, all these believing generations will get the same treatment: They will not go through the Great Tribulation. If that last generation would have to, as some believe, that would bring a separation in a group that the Word considers to be caught up together in the clouds.⁶

In all His Grace, God will sanctify His Name in the midst of the nations through a very small part of Israel that placed their trust in Him through the Old Covenant. Eventually God will fulfill all His promises, including all the promises He made to our patriarchs, and He will give Israel the physical territory spoken of in the Bible.⁷

The presence of the 144,000 that are sealed and the two witnesses

In the period of the Great Tribulation, God will seal a group of 144,000 believers. All things indicate that this is a group in and of the people of Israel. Contrary to portions

¹ According to Zech. 12:1-3.

² Zech. 14.

³ Gal. 3:7,14.

⁴ Eph. 4:8, Ps. 68:20, Matt. 27:52-53. It's thought that this group of captivity consists of the righteous believers from the centuries before the Crucifixion. Jesus Christ took these believers with Him from Hades. The Bible does not elaborate on this.

⁵ 1 Cor. 15:51, 1 Thes. 4:13-18.

⁶ 1 Thess. 4:17 states 'together'. See also 4:18: Why would Paul exhort believers to 'comfort one another with these words when the perspective of that last generation of believers that are alive would be the tribulation judgments?

⁷ Gen. 12:7.

of Israel that have not yet come to recognize their Messiah, these 144,000 believe that Jesus Christ truly is the Messiah. Most likely this group is already mentioned¹ in the Old Testament as part of the remnant of Israel that does not sin. These 144,000 will remain on earth during a part of the Great Tribulation, but they will be sealed. This sealing means that Satan cannot harm them and that the disasters coming over the earth will not touch them. Are these 144,000 also part of the “male child” that the “woman” of Revelation 12 gives birth to? Could this woman represent the twelve tribes as well as the twelve apostles, both groups being represented in the heavenly Jerusalem? It is a fact that the male child gets caught up in heaven, as are these 144,000.²

Some believe the male child is Christ but the Greek word *harpadzo* used in Revelation 12 means “snatching away” and it does not match the situation in Acts 1 where the disciples were looking steadfastly to heaven as our Lord Jesus went up.

Something very special is going to happen and the Bible doesn’t reveal all the information about this last period.³

The angel who will preach the gospel to the whole world is first seen in Revelation 14, well into the period of the Great Tribulation and long after the Bride, the 144,000, and the great multitude reached by the 12 tribes have been taken away or, being martyrs, are in heaven as well. Until the end, those who are still alive on earth after these different “harvests,” will get a last chance. It is clear that people who do not want to accept the angel’s message will wear the mark of the beast with conviction. They will become part of his system.

Also the two witnesses⁴ spoken of in Revelation will preach the Word of God in Jerusalem and will be visible, most likely through modern technology, throughout the whole earth. The story of their actions during the first 3 ½ years shows how great the hostility will be against the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the middle of the Great Tribulation, the moment that the antichrist declares himself to be god, these two

1 Zeph. 3:13.

2 Some believe the male child is Christ during His first Coming, but the Greek word *harpadzo*, used in Revelation 12, means ‘snatching away’ and it does not match the situation of Acts 1 where the disciples were looking steadfastly to heaven as our Lord Jesus went up.

3 Read Rev. 10:4-11. Rev. 14 shows that the 144,000 are added to the other believers in heaven. Only after this, the seven plagues take place. Is this group of 144,000 Israelites, as the redeemed from the earth, a mystery that connects the Bride in heaven with the remnant of Israel on earth?

4 Rev. 11. The two witnesses are already mentioned in Zech. 4:11-14.

witnesses will be killed by Satan. They will lie lifeless before the eyes of the whole world in the streets of Jerusalem for 3 ½ days. God will resurrect them, and then they will also ascend to heaven, following the Bride.

As a thief in the night?

After the explanation of the Feast of Trumpets, we can now well understand why Jesus said “nobody knows the day nor the hour.” We understand that this saying could be referring to both the start of the Feast of Trumpets and the Jewish wedding, where the father of the bridegroom decides when everything is ready. The moment that the Father gives permission to the Bridegroom to get the Bride, runs parallel (as far as the Rapture is concerned) with the moment that the Last Trumpet is sounded during the Feast of Trumpets. ¹

Jesus does not come as a thief for those who expect Him!

In the main book we explain why the exact date of the fulfillment of this feast on God’s calendar is not necessarily the same date as on the calendar of modern Israel. But that does not mean that we cannot understand His Times, and in this context we should not disregard the new moon in the fall².

Some quote the Bible verse that says that Jesus will come “as a thief in the night”. But in Revelation Jesus Christ says to the (people in the) church of Sardes that *if they don’t wake up*, He will come as a thief and they will not know at which hour the thief will overtake them. For us that is mainly a warning to remain watchful and “keep our clothes clean”. The Bible tells watchful believers *that they don’t live in darkness, so that this Day will not overtake them as a thief in the night*.³ Also in the book of Revelation it is written that Jesus comes as a thief in the night⁴ *for those who do not expect Him*. They grope in the dark. Hopefully we will not use the (as a thief in the night) argument any longer as a reason to remain ignorant and unprepared. True disciples take care that they don’t become complacent in their preparation for His coming.

¹ See 1 Thess. 4:16, speaking of this trumpet of God.

² See what is said in the main book about the second month of ‘Adar’. But this doesn’t mean that we cannot understand the times, because Jesus says specifically in Matthew 24 that the generation who sees the fig tree budding (bible scholars hold that is Israel in its own land), must know that they will experience what He foretells. Since 1948, or at least since 1967, the hourglass is running.

³ 1 Thess. 5:2-5.

⁴ Rev. 16:15.

The saying that “He comes as a thief in the night” also refers to the temple service. The priests took turns to watch over the temple mount. The supervisors of the priests made their rounds during the night to inspect all the watchers. The priests had to be watchful, for they had to keep the fire burning. When the supervisor came close to a night watch he would call out, “Peace be with you!” If the Levitical priest didn’t jump up to greet him, then he knew that this watcher had fallen asleep.¹ In this case, the watcher could get beaten with a stick and his clothes could be burned² or be taken away, so that he was naked.³ Falling asleep during such an important task was serious, for the fire had to be kept burning day and night. The inspector of the night watch came thus “as a thief in the night”. In this context, the following text from Revelation becomes even more significant:

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”⁴

This is an even greater confirmation that the picture of the coming of Jesus Christ should not surprise us if we are prepared and watchful. The sleeping church will not be watchful because they don’t expect their High Priest and King yet, or, maybe they don’t expect Him at all. But the believers who expect Him are called to keep the fire burning. They are certainly not to sit back and wait, without making their calling and election sure!⁵

Also, the argument that Jesus used to answer His disciples regarding whether or not “it was not their task to know times or seasons”⁶ cannot be used as an excuse to remain ignorant. The question of the disciples came from their curiosity. They wanted to know if the Kingdom was going to be restored for Israel at that moment. Not long after this event, the mystery that had remained hidden for many ages, was revealed to Paul.⁷ God had also shown Daniel that a few things would remain hidden until the last days, and then be revealed at that time.⁸ But Jesus did inform His disciples about what would take place before His return.⁹

1 Mishnah, Tractate Middot 1:2.

2 After which the priest would no longer have white clothes!

3 See templeinstitute.org, the site of the Temple Institute in Jerusalem, for more information.

4 Rev. 16:15.

5 2 Pet. 1:10-11.

6 Acts 1:7.

7 Eph. 2 & 3, Gal. 1:12.

8 Dan. 12:4.

9 Matt. 24.

That is why this additional e-book, together with the main book, is a serious wake-up call. After the Rapture, we're afraid that part of the churches will (through gritting teeth or through much sorrow) have to conclude that they have been asleep for a long time.¹ Maybe some were members of a church for their whole life. The Bridegroom is coming for a Bride that is eagerly awaiting His arrival. He looks from afar to see if the lamp is burning in the window. The oil in the lamp speaks of being light, doing His will. The Sprit and the Bride say, "Come".²

Again the 70 weeks of Daniel

In the chapter about the Timelines, we show that God³ has appointed a period of 70 year-weeks for His people, Israel.

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophesy and to anoint⁴ the Most Holy⁵

This is an all-encompassing statement! Not only will there be an end to transgressions, but also of sins, and iniquities will be reconciled. That moment must coincide with the Day of Atonement, when Jesus Christ as High Priest will leave the Heavenly Temple and set His feet on the Mount of Olives. The last year-week will therefore inevitably lead, after many judgments and while Satan is trying to prevent this, to the Millennium of Peace. This closing situation is only possible when God has finalized His complete Plan with the broken-off branches of the True Olive Tree and the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will have come to repentance and mourning.⁶ That is the connection with the last period of seven years; the first 69 weeks were only applicable to the people of Israel, and therefore, this last period will again only focus on the part of Israel that in the verse above is named "your people"⁷, Daniels people.

¹ See in Matt. 25 the parable of the 5 foolish and 5 wise virgins.

² Rev. 22:17.

³ The moment that the decree was given to rebuild Jerusalem in Daniel 9:24. Many historians date this moment as the 15th of March 445 BC.

⁴ The Hebrew Stern translation says: "and to anoint the Special Holy Place".

⁵ Dan. 9:24.

⁶ Zech. 12:10-13.

⁷ Dan. 9:24.

Why did the 70th year-week remain hidden?

God informed Daniel that there were 70 year-weeks determined for Israel, yet only the period of 69 year-weeks is explicitly described in the book of Daniel. Nothing is said about the 70th year-week in that part of the Book of Daniel. God interwove that part of the pattern into other patterns. Because the first 69 year-weeks are in perfect sequence, you would expect that the 70th week would follow the 69th week immediately. But that didn't happen.

With the help of historians, we can follow the 69 year-weeks exactly¹, but after the 69th week we see a new period, in which the Jews were dispersed over the whole earth. The 70th week seemed lost, yet the promise for this last year-week of 7 years remained.

After the 69th year-week, God started a new way, through Jesus Christ, with His New Covenant people, the Body of Christ. In Biblical terms, these are the circumcised of heart from Israel and from the Gentiles. He formed them into the "one new man in Christ."² In fact, it was not a different way with a completely different group of people, but now believers in Jesus Christ from the Gentiles were added as fellow heirs and fellow citizens of the saints, also part of the household of God. They received access to the Covenant that God had renewed with the house of Judah and the house of Israel during the time that Jesus Christ was on earth. See the main book for more information.

This new group of people that was allowed to enter in was not going to walk a completely new and different path. These participants were, as wild branches and against their Gentile nature, grafted into the same True Olive Tree, His household, which God had been working on through the ages. Therefore, the old people (in as much that they did not want to be part of the New Covenant) were not finished! For Paul tells us about a *temporal* and *partial* hardening of a part of His people, until the moment that the fullness of the Gentiles will be accomplished.³ Most likely this will

¹ From 445-444 BC until 32-33 AD. See also the book of F. N. Jones about the chronology of the Old Testament. This author has a slightly different starting date but he also concludes that the 69 weeks ended when Christ fulfilled Pesach.

² Eph. 2:17,19,3:6 & Rom. 11:25. The New Covenant was not only offered to the Gentiles (from afar), but first of all to the Jews (nearby) who believed in Jesus Christ as Messiah. Entering into the fullness of the Gentiles depicts the moment of closure, while meanwhile many from Israel have entered or today will still enter in through their faith in Yeshua Ha Mashiach.

³ See all of Romans 11 with the emphasis on verse 25.

not entail just a number, but it will probably be a spiritual quality that the Lord is looking for...

Although very many of the old people of Israel had walked away from the Old Covenant, God did not do away with the promises from the Old Covenant¹, but reserved the completion of it until the moment that the 70th year-week (the 70th period of 7 years) would start and have its course. Then He will still show that the New Covenant was meant for them² in the first place, since all covenants are theirs.³

In the meantime, the new branches have not been called to Judaize⁴ if they were not true Jews. But as the main book explains, Messianic believers from the Gentiles, as well as from the Jews, are called to live the New Covenant discipleship meaning of many old rituals and feasts, merged into one new man in Christ, Who is the reality of it all.

God told Daniel which period He had determined for Israel, but a part of the mystery was also hidden from Daniel and this was explicitly explained to him⁵. Daniel said that these last seven years would be very difficult. These words cannot be a description of the period of 32-39 AD (following the 69th week), for nothing remarkable happened then. Furthermore, we know that at the end of the 70th year-week, complete reconciliation will take place and there will be an end to sin. The characteristics of this last 70th year week were not made known until 700 years after the time of Daniel when Jesus Christ came to John and revealed them in detail. John transcribed these to become the Book of Revelation. The revelation of these 70 year-weeks given to Daniel is an important proof that God follows separate ways with those who hold onto the Older Covenant than with the believers of the New Covenant.⁶

But it's certain that these two ways will come together in Christ. In our time, we see that this coming together has already started. Not in the least by the growing number of Messianic believers in the land of Israel, but also through the believers

1 Just as the Covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as with David were not annulled by God after their death. These Covenants are eternal.

2 In comparison: Although the brothers of Joseph did not recognize him for a long time and banned him from their world (to Egypt), they finally recognized Joseph as their brother who brought salvation for them as well, after Joseph had first been a blessing for Egypt in a time of famine.

3 Rom. 9:4

4 The Greek word *ιουδαῖζω* means: live according to Jewish rituals. However, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek but the one new man. This man is called to walk the reality in Christ.

5 Dan. 12:9.

6 Once again: this one new man consists of Jews and non-Jews, but they all believe in Jesus Christ as their Messiah and are grafted into the life-force of the True Olive Tree.

from the Gentiles who are rediscovering the Biblical-Hebrew inheritance of their faith. Knowing that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for ... instruction in righteousness, they have started to incorporate all these truths in their discipleship walk, in their New Covenant meaning.¹ On turn, this facilitates the forming of one Body of Christ.

God didn't dismiss the older covenant, but reserved its
completion for Israel until the 70th year-week

The believers who start to understand what will happen before the Millennium of Peace comes, will see Israel in a different light. Not as a people that “behaves holier,” but as a people that are sanctified, set aside by God, and with whom God will fulfill the promises of His everlasting faithfulness. The period in which the Israel of the Older Covenant will be central, is coming and its prelude has already started. Through the coming birth-pangs, God will bring them into the New Covenant in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: When the seven years of Tribulation start, the countdown of the completion of the 70th year-week will begin. God will focus on Israel to sanctify His Name in the eyes of the whole world. Israel will be restored in calling and position. God will fulfill all of His promises of the Old Covenant to Israel, despite the fact that Israel has walked away from the Covenants repeatedly. That is true grace. The Church of Christ needs to receive the same grace, because many churches have also trampled the New Covenant. They also walked away from His commandments² and they have sinned against the Jews and even against the Jewish (Messianic) branches that were connected to the True Olive Tree.

In the letter to the Romans and in the Book of Revelation, it is written that “all of Israel” will come to faith in Jesus Christ by the end of this terribly dark period. God will bring all nations to Israel to show that He has chosen this people in that region, and has given them this land to possess.³ He will deal with the nations who have completely followed the enemy being deceived by him. At the same time, all of Israel will see God miraculously saving them from an immense army, an overpowering force that will attack them with satanic aggression.

¹ 2 Tim. 3:16-17.

² In spite of the words of Jesus in John 14:15.

³ Ex. 6:7.

The enemy also realizes that the prelude has started and that the end-times clock has started ticking.¹ He must have known that the Balfour declaration² in 1917 promised a Jewish homeland. This is why he used the reign of Adolf Hitler with satanic force and determination in an extreme attempt to prevent the state of Israel from becoming a fact. He knew from that moment on, his reign over this earth would soon come to an end.³ When Israel regained her undivided capital city in 1967, the fig tree surely started to bud⁴ and the clock started to tick even louder. In his rebellion he has tried to turn the general opinion of many nations against Israel and surely will he try one more time to prevent God's plan with Israel. First he will take the sly approach⁵ and then make a frontal attack on this people during the Great Tribulation. But he can only act within the set appointed times.

The enemy will start his final attempt with a sly move. From a Christian angle, the antichrist is often painted as a very demonic figure, but during this first phase his devilish personality will not show itself. Many people with a religious background who have been left behind after the Rapture, will accept him completely as a messiah-figure, especially after the many signs and wonders he will perform. Also in Israel (where there is a high expectation of the Messiah amongst many believing Jews) the antichrist will be recognized by many as the long-awaited Messiah. Many Jews today are of the opinion that the third temple can only be built when the Messiah has come. And the preparations for the construction are almost finished. There are even Jewish groups who don't want to wait with the construction. In the Bible we read that there will again be sacrifices offered in the temple in Jerusalem. Many are of the opinion that the antichrist, by giving his permission, will help the Jews with the construction of the temple in Jerusalem. In this respect, he will deceive many Jews by his signs

1 During the period of the Great Tribulation, Satan will be removed completely from the heavens, only raging on earth. See Rev. 12:7-8 etc.

2 A letter was written on November 2, 1917 by Arthur James Balfour, the British minister of Foreign Affairs, to Lord Rothschild, a letter meant for the Zionistic Federation. In this declaration the founding of a 'national home' for the Jewish people in what was then called Palestine, was supported. The only stipulation was that they could not undermine the rights of non-Jewish settlements. The words 'national home' gave the British later on the possibility to deny that they had meant a Jewish state. The British had also offered Palestine to the Turkish, the French and the Arabs.

3 It is remarkable that the Islam recognizes that the land of Israel belongs to the Jews. See the surah's 5:21 and 17:104 in their Quran.

4 One could say that the tree was planted in 1948 and that the budding started in 1967, when the tree was firmly rooted.

5 Matt. 24: 32-34. See also the next item about the 70th year-week.

and wonders.¹ They will be premature in their recognition of a wonderful “prince of peace”² who will turn out not to be God’s Messiah.³

In the next paragraphs we will discover that it is no different for the Muslims, as they also expect their messiah at what appears to be the beginning of the seven-year period. Through a deception that the adversary has been concocting for many centuries, the antichrist shall make believers from many religions into his followers, and blind them!

We again return to the Preterists, who believe that the period of the Great Tribulation and the “return” of Christ already took place in the first century AD. If that were true, then first of all, the 70th week from the prophecy of Daniel should have been fulfilled. But the Preterists have a great problem of interpretation here, because God informed Daniel that at the end of this year-week, the iniquities of His people and of His Holy City would be finished, sin would be ended, and **eternal** justice would be brought in. They can see that these words were not yet fulfilled in the first century AD and still await their fulfillment. Also, Jesus Christ has not come back *in like manner as the disciples have seen him go into heaven*. Preterists who hold that He has already come back (spiritually) negate these words that the two angels spoke to the disciples on God’s behalf.⁴

The Mystery Paul is speaking about

Of course we wonder why these 69 weeks were an established consecutive period of time “which were afore hand determined for the people of Israel,” while we have been waiting for such a long time for the last week. Although many prophets in the Old Testament prophesied about the end of times, nothing is said about the Church of Christ (as the Body of Christ), about her position, or her heavenly calling. God kept this plan hidden from the world and from the enemy, until He first revealed it to the apostle Paul. The shadows of this mystery were placed in the Old Testament as a watermark. God allowed Paul to know this mystery when he was called, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, because this mystery formed the foundation of his calling: To bring the gospel to the Gentiles. In our churches little attention is given to these mysteries, while Paul often spoke about them:

¹ Dan. 8:24. The saints mentioned there are Israelites. See Dan. 8:11:23-25, Matt. 24:15.

² By showing himself to be a peacemaker, especially in the first 3.5 years, making a temple possible for the Jews.

³ Dan. 9:27.

⁴ Acts 1:9-11.

... the mysteries kept secret since the world began¹
 ... a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages, for our glory²
 ... which in other ages was not made known³
 ... which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God⁴

The prophets of the Old Testament clearly prophesied about events which would take place in the distant future, but God sealed the interval and the timing until His exact time had come. Through Paul and the other apostles, He started a new part of His Plan while setting the stage for the last year-week. Although Paul spoke some 2000 years ago about these “mysteries,”⁵ sadly they (unnecessarily) remain hidden from our churches. However, for watchful believers, they should not remain mysteries, especially not in our days when we see prophecies being fulfilled before our very eyes!

Next to these prophecies there are many shadows to be discovered that have been placed within the Old Testament. They point to the reality in the New Testament and are being unfolded before our eyes. The main book shows this in many chapters. We will again refer to a few of these prophecies in the next section of this additional e-book.

When does the 70th year-week start?

The starting date of the 70th year-week is not given in the Bible, but God does give important clues, or prophecies, about the events that will happen before the start of the last year-week. When Jesus walked on the earth, His disciples wanted to know how they could know that the time of the end was near.⁶ The most important clue is that Jesus said to watch the “fig tree,” the symbol of the nation of Israel from the Old Covenant.⁷

When that “fig tree” starts to bud, the last things will happen within one generation. This parable of Jesus is not isolated, for also in the Book of Ezekiel⁸ it was written that a time would come that the Jews would return to their land. That time was

¹ Romans 16:25. In the Complete Jewish Bible (David Stern) it says: “The revelation of the secret truth...kept hidden in silence for ages and ages.”

² 1 Cor. 2:7.

³ Eph. 3:5.

⁴ Eph. 3:9.

⁵ That is to say, issues which become clear when we study His Word.

⁶ Matt. 24:3.

⁷ Matt. 21:19-20, Luke 13:6-9, Hos. 2:11-12.

⁸ Ezek. 36 & 37.

not a reference to the time that Jesus was on earth but to the time of the end. First there had to be a period of the Jews being dispersed over the whole world.¹ For the disciples this information was still a mystery. They did not understand that some 40 years later the Jews would begin to be scattered to all ends of the earth for nearly 1900 years.

After God's deeds in the end-times, the position of Israel will be blessed. God never broke the Old Covenant with the house of Judah and His promises are and will remain true. However, both houses of Israel and Judah walked away from the protection of this older Covenant.

The deliverance of the land during the wars of the last decades, and the enormous miracles in the agricultural sector, in technology, and in science, show that Israel can discern the contours of God's protection, while it has not yet recognized its Messiah. This fits perfectly in the picture of Joseph who took care of his brothers under very difficult circumstances by providing grain for them, even after they had rejected him and still didn't recognize him while in Egypt. From this shadow, we can already foresee what will happen when part of Israel recognizes their Messiah. Now they are being taken care of, but later they will recognize their Yeshua. We read that they will be very emotional when this realization comes. They will cry about their Messiah as "one mourns for his only son."² Also Paul speaks here about a mystery, saying when the fullness of the Gentiles has come, God will take the blindness in part from all His people (Israel) away.³

What a time this will be! God will once again be able to graft in those natural branches that were broken off the True Olive Tree. This will happen in the near future, despite the replacement theology. Then finally it will be clear that the natural branches are more quickly and easily (re)grafted onto the True Olive tree than the wild branches. It may also be clear that many wild and proud branches throughout history were never grafted in, despite them calling themselves a church and believers. Jesus will have to say to many branches, "I never knew you."⁴

We repeat: This temporal and partial blindness does not hinder God from starting His Plan already, as it refers to the land of Israel and to that part of the Israelites that

1 Starting at the year 70 AD.

2 Zech. 12:10.

3 Rom. 11:25.

4 Luke 23:13.

hold on to the Old Covenant. For God has aligned Himself with them forever. The age of the New Covenant runs parallel and this age is almost finished. In the main book we describe in more detail how the approach of the dispensation theology needs to be nuanced. A strong application of this theology can cause a kind of temporal replacement theology and this shouldn't happen. The Bible shows God's time pattern. It shows us that this remnant of Israel will eventually see that God has offered this New Covenant to them and it is still meant for them. As explained earlier, the non-Jewish believers have become fellow heirs within this New Covenant.

Just like after every Feast of Weeks, Israel is still in a long dry summer today. But when the Feast of Trumpets starts in the fall, with the blowing of the shofar, everything will point to the Great Wedding, and to a temporal opened door in heaven.¹ After the Feast of Trumpets and before Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), there is a period of at least seven full days. The Book of Revelation speaks of a period of 7 years or $7 \times 360 = 2520$ days,² after the Rapture of the Church of Christ until the moment that Jesus Christ returns as King and as the Bridegroom Yeshua Who comes for them, to marry them and their Land.³ Shall we also be watchmen on the wall, sharing these things with them, the people of Israel?

The wedding ceremony, the 70th week of Daniel and
the story in Revelation about the great tribulation all
confirm the same patterns and rhythm

The same pattern keeps showing up and we find it again in the Hebrew wedding ritual. After the bridegroom has given his bride-to-be gifts, he departs for a long period of time to prepare the house. His departure runs parallel with the end of the 69th year-week. After a long time, when he comes to get the Bride for the Wedding-week, the 70th week of Daniel starts! The Hebrew bridegroom came for the bride before midnight, to take her to the wedding ritual that followed and lasted seven days. It all fits perfectly in the picture of the worldwide Bride that will be taken before midnight, after which she will be in heaven for at least seven years.

¹ Paul speaks in I Cor. 15:52 about 'the last trumpet', a clear referral to the Feast of Trumpets. This last trumpet is the long lasting tone of a series of 100 alternate tones. The feast of Trumpets, the opened door and the Great Wedding are all described in detail in the main book.

² These 2520 days recall the 2520 years on God's calendar that God had determined between the moment of the return from Babylon/Persia in 537 BC and the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948.

³ See Isa. 61:10, 62:4-5.

The rhythm and the timing of God's plan is found throughout the Bible. God appointed His structure and calendar from the beginning and has largely revealed it. More common patterns underline the blueprint of God's plan, as explained in the main book. At some point in the near future, we will be amazed, not only about His unfathomable love, but we will also look at the perfect content and even at the sovereign and precise execution of God's Plan of Salvation, already determined before the foundation of the world.

The confusion of religions after the Rapture

The Bible describes how that coming of the antichrist will be coupled with signs and wonders¹ and that many will be deceived. Although the Bride will not be on the earth anymore from the moment of the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets, the so-called wise virgins can still learn of the events that will take place in this last year-week. For what takes place during the first period of the antichrist has already been in the making for years. The "multimedia" and "global" spirit of our time just before this last "week" will provide the conditions for the acceptance of the antichrist. Before our eyes, we see worldwide control mechanisms, political conflicts, and natural disasters as described in the Bible, becoming reality. In Europe we see many people turning against their governments or what they call "the elite." They do not understand why Europe is giving away its identity by allowing the European governmental institutions ("Brussels") to make all kinds of decisions leading to a Europe without its previous diversity of nations, each having its specific culture. Not many realize that this is not about our governments or politicians, but about an evil power that is directing the whole world towards a one-world government out of chaos. Most of the people that are part of this elite do not know about the evil agenda that is behind this and seem to be acting in good faith.

Even the picture painted in the Quran² can help us to get a more complete view of the time to come!

In the Bible, Jesus Christ is central as God's Son, Who came from heaven to the earth to save people and reconcile man with God. He gave His life that whosoever believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. He rose from the dead and returned to God the Father to be our High Priest in the heavenly Temple. He is our Advocate and Mediator.

¹ See II Thess. 2:9-12, Matt. 24:24, Mark 13:22.

² Although we will soon discover, in the next pages, that there is a clear and very crucial difference between the Biblical scenario and the version of the Quran.

Those beliefs are under a great deal of scrutiny today. An Interfaith-movement, trying to find common ground for all religions, proposes that Jesus also has a prominent place in the Quran. Just as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Zachariah, Moses, Joseph, and Mary have their place in the history of the Quran,¹ so has Jesus also been given a place, *but only as a very important prophet Isa.*

The divine announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary is also described in the Quran, perhaps to the surprise of many Christians.² According to the Interfaith movement, which strives for an all-inclusive world-religion, this should appease many believers, because it shows “we all serve the same God.” In the Quran, Jesus is also called Messiah and like in the Bible, He is “The word of God.” Don’t be surprised when you hear a Muslim say that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. But Wake Up!; The differences are essential, as we will show. The Interfaith movement has a purpose to “overcome” or to brush aside these differences, and this is why we have to be very alert.

In the Quran Jesus is described as Isa, the Messiah and
even the word of God, but there He is not God’s Son

For the greatest part, the early history of the Jews and the Christians is recognized and described by Islam, when Muhammad³ received a vision in the year 610 AD. He assumed that Jews and Christians were done away with by God, and that he had to finish the work of “the prophet Jesus.” From that moment, their line of history deviated substantially from the one of Judaism and Christianity and Islam became a religion of its own. We also see from that period onwards, that the picture of the end times was rewritten, as compared to the already existing texts in the Book of Revelation⁴ and the Old Testament prophets. The global picture that Islam paints still partly fits in the Biblical end times scenario. But key persons are mixed up, and comparable situations are given a quite different meaning, or they are sometimes completely mirrored, as we will see shortly!

1 The Islam denounces the thought that these stories are borrowed from the Bible. They state that Muhammad could not read nor write and therefore received the history directly from Allah. In his days ‘he could not have copied them from the already well-known Biblical history’. Could he not have heard of the many Jews living in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century AD, many people wonder?

2 The English translation of the Quran s. 3:42-51 states: “Oh Mary, behold, Allah announces you with a Word from Him, a joyful tiding: his name is the messiah, Jesus, son of Mary.” (see also surah’s 4:171 and 5:46). Please take a note, we abbreviate the word surah with s.

3 He lived from about 570 - 632 AD.

4 This book was completed 5 centuries earlier.

Nevertheless, despite this obvious mirroring, mixing up, and very different interpretations, the Quran states that the God of the Bible is also the Allah of the Quran.¹

We don't agree.

In the Quran, Allah says that he first entered into a covenant with the children of Israel, who broke the covenant, which in turn hardened their hearts.² Allah also entered into a covenant with the Christians³ but they also neglected a part of "what they should remember."⁴ Until this point, this is not a completely wrong interpretation of the true situation, if you look back from the 7th century (with today's knowledge) of the history of the Jews and Christians. However, God did not give up on them, as Muslims believe.

Why are persons and roles mixed up in the Quran in comparison with the Bible?

Unfortunately, the Christians had allowed Christianity to become encapsulated in the Roman Empire as the state religion, and it was therefore extremely influenced by hedonistic influences and rituals. As a result, the Christian faith became completely estranged from her roots within a few centuries. In many stories, the Quran refers to "the Book" (that's what they call the Bible) because there is a common history.

When you start reading the Quran attentively, it becomes clear that the Allah of the Islam cannot be the same God of the Bible. Although Muhammad was convinced that he had received those instructions from God, we can verify that at crucial points the words Allah speaks in the Quran are the opposite of the words and promises given by the God of the Bible. Can it really be that what was described in the Old and New Testament suddenly became wrong or untrue with the coming of Muhammad? That would mean that not only the Jews and the Christians deviated from the Truth, but that also the Bible was incorrect.

1 Quran s. 29 (al-Ankabut "the Spider") verse 46: "Our God and your God are one and we all are subject to Him".

2 Quran s. 5:12-13.

3 Based on the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-33 this is untrue. The New Covenant was entered into with the house of Judah and the house of Israel, but this covenant through faith in Jesus Christ opened up for non-Jews, who were counted to be children of Abraham through faith in Jesus Christ.

4 Quran s. 5:14.

Christians need to be very aware of the differences in spite of the fact that the Isa of the Quran is a very important prophet and Isa is also honored as messiah.¹ Muslims recognize that God's Holy Spirit "was" in him². The Quran also describes almost the same story of the angel³ who tells Mary that she will be pregnant without having intimacy with a man, but will become pregnant by God. It will even surprise many Christians that the Quran says that Allah taught Jesus the Bible (the Torah) and the Gospel, and made him a messenger to the children of Israel.⁴ A Muslim will immediately confirm that they expect the return of Jesus, but with the Islamic name "Isa."⁵ They certainly refer to the same man who brought the Gospel to Israel. But we have to be alert because although the Quran seems to be talking about the same person, they only see Jesus as a remarkable person or a prophet, but absolutely not as the Son of God. According to the Quran, Allah does not have a son.⁶ It is said that Muhammad finished the work that was started by the prophet Isa. According to Islam, although they wanted to crucify Isa, this failed. For Allah raptured this prophet Isa before this happened.⁷ He did not die and therefore did not rise from the dead. The Quran writes that Allah has a different road and law for the Jews, Christians and Muslims and purposefully made the choice not to make them into one people.⁸ Yes, according to the Quran, Allah did make a covenant with "the children of Israel," but Israel broke the covenant. That is also the reason God cursed them. Afterwards, God made a covenant with those who say they are Christians, but as stated above, Islam teaches that they forgot in part what they had been taught.⁹ Therefore, "God caused enmity amongst them, and according to the Islam this will last until the day of the Resurrection."

All these religions will be judged according to their Book, but according to Muhammad it will become clear that Islam is the "true religion." From a 7th century

1 See Quran s. 4:172. Note already that the Mahdi, we will talk about later on, is therefore not the messiah.

2 Quran s. 2:87.

3 Quran s. 3:42.

4 Quran s. 3:48.

5 Let's not forget that Jesus is also not the Messiah's correct name, but the Latin name. For the original name is Yeshua or Yehoshua. In the same manner the Islam uses the name Isa, not being His original Name.

6 According to the Quran it is far beneath God's glory to have a son (s. 4:17), he did not take a son (s. 10:68), he has no equal in the kingdom and doesn't need a helper (s. 17:111).

7 Quran s. 4:157-158. Those who thought they killed Jesus killed a look alike, according to this surah.

8 Quran s. 5: 48, but also read 43-49.

9 Quran s. 5:44 shows that Allah commanded the Israelites and the Christians to preserve the Scriptures. They are called "the people of the Book" (s. 29:46), but according to the Quran they have failed.

AD viewpoint, some of these facts come close to the truth.¹ Whatever the Interfaith movement states, based on the opposite statements described above, a connection between Islam and Christianity is impossible, unless believers start watering down their belief in the Bible. And yet, maybe on purpose, this movement also completely ignores the Islamic claim of it being the true religion. The claim of this movement is that both religions miss a piece of the total picture (or maybe interpret it differently) and that they are talking about the same deity. If that were truly the case, then maybe the problem would not be that significant. But God and Allah state totally different things, not in the least about God having a Son. Hidden behind both interpretations is a major conflict, which will be revealed in an awful way in the coming years before the return of Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches that this is a spiritual war in heavenly places, but with great consequences for the people on earth. It will be the ultimate war between Light and Darkness. We already can see some of the work of the dark and evil powers.

The end time scenario according to Islam

As said before, the Quran also portrays an end times scenario, but it gives a mirrored image of what the Bible teaches. In the last period, the Mahdi², also called the 12th imam by the Shiites, will appear. According to many, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (the former president of Iran) was convinced that he should prepare for the coming of the Mahdi.³ Anyway, the coming of this Mahdi will happen in a period when the whole region is in chaos. From this we can understand clearly that peace and quiet in the Middle East is not the preference for the more radical Muslims. They expect the last imam⁴ to come in the near future, and therefore, chaos is a requirement! Through the Hadith in the Islamic tradition⁵, a picture is painted that shows some concurrence with what the Bible calls the time of labor pains. According to Islamic tradition, this period is characterized by a few dominant aspects: There will be a tremendous increase of earthquakes, the world will become greatly immoral,

1 That is to say that with the knowledge of the 7th century, the conclusion could be made indeed that as well as the Jews, the Christians also strayed from the straight path.

2 Also called "Mehdi".

3 With the Shiite Muslims, the Mahdi is a less exalted person than he is with the Sunnite Muslims. According to the Shiites, the Mahdi has already been alive for 1200 years, but the Sunnites denounce this because there is no Hadith (oral tradition) confirming this. According to the Shiite, the Dajjal (a kind of Islamic antichrist) was already alive during the time of the prophet Muhammad.

4 There is a difference of interpretation between the different groups like the Shiites and the Sunnites. The first group follows the story of the 12th imam, who are called the "twelflings". Another group, the Ishmaelite's, only recognize 7 imams.

5 Large collection of written down Islamic oral traditions about the life and sayings of Muhammad (source: Wikipedia).

homosexuality and incest will be tolerated, and unrighteousness will be the norm. The fear amongst the nations will increase and the Arabic world will shake off its foreign influences. Other important requirements of the Islamic end times indicate that slaves will rebel against their masters and that the world order will collapse. Egypt¹, Syria, Yemen², Saudi Arabia³, Iraq,⁴ and Iran are named as countries where revolutions will take place. The picture that is painted comes very close to today's situation in the Middle East⁵, but is for the most part also in line with earlier Biblical predictions⁶ about this period just before the Great Tribulation.

A very remarkable prediction in the Hadith is given about Saudi Arabia: before the coming of the Mahdi, Saudi Arabia will have a king with the name of an animal. The name of the former king was Fahd⁷, which is the name of a leopard⁸. According to the Hadith his brother Abdullah will succeed him and that is indeed the name of the present-day king of this oil-kingdom. After the death of king Abdullah⁹ there will come an end to the long reign of this dynasty¹⁰, and there will be chaos in the country because of the succession¹¹, and this shall be the sign of the coming of the Mahdi.¹² Because the Hadith, the written down oral traditions, state this, we can expect that some groups within the Islam will seek to fulfill what was written.

The Islamic Hadith also describes that there will be much division and war between the Arab nations. They will accuse each other of unbelief¹³, but this is also a good

1 Inhabitants of Egypt will rebel against their rulers, and the country will enter into a long period of chaos.

2 Before the coming of the Mahdi there will be a holy rebellion for the truth. The rebellion in Yemen will be led by the Mahdi and will be part of the plan. See "The Promised Hujjatullah Al-Yamani: The Shi'a at the Time of the Appearance - Tween Al-Yamani and the Guardian", p. 116.

3 Within this tradition there is a revolution expected after the death of a king named Abdullah. The revolution is about the succession of the throne. According to the Hadith, the Mahdi will be coming after the death of king Abdullah.

4 Tribes will war with each other. But in the end, the Mahdi will reign from Iraq.

5 Ayatollah Ali Qurani: "Asr al Dhuhoor" (The age of Appearance).

6 See as an example the many prophecies over nations and countries in the book of Isaiah.

7 According to the Hadith, from a distance he will look slanted or crooked, but up close he has a straight look.

8 Also called Fahd in Arabic.

9 He died at the age of 90 on January, 23, 2015.

10 Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 52, p. 210.

11 In June 2012 crown-prince Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud died. The king has survived two successors of the throne. The generation that is a direct descendant of the founder of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud, is dying off.

12 See "The Promised Hujjatullah Al-Yamani: The Shi'a at the Time of the Appearance - Tween Al-Yamani and the Guardian", p. 38 referring to the "Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal" (a collection of Hadith of the Sunni teacher Ibn Hanbal).

13 See the enormous war between the Islamic parties in Syria and Iraq that accuse each other of either extremism or of not enough strictness in their beliefs. They therefore try to subdue each other.

sign, for it is a sign of the coming of the Mahdi.¹ The conquering (in their eyes; the deliverance) of Palestine is described as one of the most important events around the coming of the Mahdi. From this we understand the all but conciliatory viewpoint of the Islam about Israel.

Islam: war and division between Arab nations is one
of the signs that the Mahdi will appear

After the appearance of the Mahdi, according to Islam, Isa as the son of Mary (Maryam) will return from heaven. He will explain that Islam is the only true religion, and shall call upon the inhabitants of the earth to stand behind and submit to the Mahdi. The coming of Isa is the sign of a coming period of judgment.² While incorporating some elements of what the Bible states about the end times, we start to understand how the enemy will gain worldwide acceptance for the antichrist. People who do not know Him and His Word will conclude “it all was predicted!” When this Mahdi shows up, he will bring world peace, according to Islam. The Hadith³ describe how the Muslims in the Arabian Peninsula, Turkey and Europe will increase in power.⁴ And the clincher, the Mahdi, will make a peace treaty⁵. We recognize this because the Book of Daniel clearly shows that the antichrist (do you see the mirroring) will make a seven-year treaty. Here we see (according to the Bible) that the very moment that the antichrist appears, the Mahdi appears (according to the Quran). This Mahdi would seem (in Christian terms) to combine the combativeness and rule of a King David with the role of a forerunner, like John the Baptist.

And now we have to be watchful:

When Isa, who is “the major prophet Jesus” according to Islam, returns from heaven to earth, he will support the Mahdi and make clear to the people that Islam is the only truth. He will show that the Quran is perfect. He will fill in the gaps of the Torah, under which the Jews and Christians must live, and receive it as the God-given word (the Quran). We also know of these appearances from the Bible, but there we learn that

1 “Bihar Al-Anwar”, part 52, p. 288 and “Al-Ghaybah” by An-Nu‘mani, p. 157.

2 Quran s. 43:61 etc.

3 Large collection of written Islamic oral traditions about the life and sayings of Muhammad. The Hadith are classified within the Islam according to reliability; sahih (very reliable, authentic), hasan (good, less reliable), da‘if (doubtful, weak) and maudu’ (fabricated).

4 Hadith given by Mu‘adh ibn Jabal (Book 31, nr. 4281).

5 Tabarani, as related by Hadrat Abu Umamah, as quoted by Zubair Ali, p. 43 and Abdullah, p. 55. Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 36, Number 4273, Narrated by Umm Salamah, Ummul Mu‘minin. Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 36, Number 4272, Narrated by Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri. The hadith state that this peace treaty is with the Romans, but mediated by a Jew from priestly lineage.

at the beginning of this last seven-year period, the antichrist will be accompanied by the false prophet who will reign over the false church. This christ-figure will look like a real miracle working savior and prince of peace¹ to many millions of believers from all kinds of religions on earth. For some people, he will be like Isa, for some, like Jesus; and again for others, like Yeshua. In November 2012², a Turkish television station broadcasted³ an Interfaith-program⁴ where a Turkish forum leader⁵ spoke about the Islamic expectation of the coming messiah. He spoke with two Jewish scholars⁶ and leaders of the Sanhedrin⁷, who shared their expectation about the messiah, and this created a sense of unity between them. At the end of a long dialogue, it became clear that both groups assumed that the Messiah of the Jews was the same person as the one in the Quran. They claimed that the only difference was the names they used for their messiahs. According to them, they share the same roots, and therefore, the same future, when the messiah comes and brings peace. Rabbi Hollander stated that Judaism and Islam will complement each other, because God is so big that he works through both religions.

Although the Jews have access to the end times predictions given by their prophets⁸, they miss (or reject) the essential information from the New Testament, and therefore, also from the Book of Revelation. That is why they don't expect an antichrist first, but instead expect the coming of their messiah to take place immediately. At that time the Mahdi will "coincidentally" proclaim the (anti)christ-figure to be the person of Isa, a major prophet in Islam. This will lead many into a sad deception. Yet the Old Testament of the Bible has long informed them that they will wake up after 3 ½ years⁹. But these rabbis of the Jewish Sanhedrin apparently neglect this warning or they haven't seen or understood this.

1 "Sunan Abu Dawud", Book 37, Nr. 4310 bt Abu Huraira: a man of average length and of white, reddish skin color, wearing two light yellow robes. It looks like drops of water fall from his head while his hair is not wet. 'He will fight for the sake of the Islam, break the crosses and kill the pigs'.

2 Broadcasted on November 12, 2012.

3 Harunyahya television, an Islamic Interfaith organization

4 Being a so-called Building Bridges (between religions) Program.

5 His name is Adnan Oktar. His alias is Harunyahya.

6 Rabbi Yeshayahu Hollander (member of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem) and Rabbi Ben Abrahamson (advisor of the Sanhedrin) were present. The purpose of the Interfaith discussion was to bring religions together based on what they have in common. Rabbi Ben Abrahamson repeatedly uses the name Allah instead of the name God.

7 This highest Jewish court, after its ending in 425 AD, was re-instituted in 2004. It is for the Jewish religious leaders the sign that the Messiah is coming soon.

8 Like Ezekiel and Daniel.

9 See Daniel 7:25-26, 8:11-12, 9: 27 next to Rev. 11:1-2, 13:5-7.

For the Sunnite Muslims, the Mahdi is the “righteous, expected leader,”¹ The Shiite Muslims call this Mahdi the “lord of this age.”² This is the name that Paul used centuries earlier to describe the adversary, “the god of this age”³ or translated even better, “the god of this era.” The picture of the coming world stage gets even clearer when we observe that the religions find ever more ground to meet each other. While many Muslims currently still object to this idea, we believe that they will grow to become one. Indeed, the final tendency is going towards one world order under a political leader and with one world religion, “guided” by a prophet. By putting the stories of the Quran next to the Bible, we can gain an even better understanding of how this is going to take place.

According to Islam, the coming of the Mahdi will be followed by the return of Isa. This Isa shall deny all claims that He is the Son of God. The Islamic Isa will also convince many church believers (who were not part of the Church of Christ at the Rapture) to follow him. This is what the Hadith predict. The Hadith, of course, talk about many unbelievers and Christians all becoming Muslim.⁴ You could conclude that Isa will appear in such a way that the people remaining on earth will think that he must be the Jesus Christ of the Bible. The Quran says that this Jesus will be the witness on the Day of Judgment, testifying against all Christians who refused to become Muslim.⁵ Muslims believe that the Christians and Jews will then acknowledge that Isa was raptured by Allah and now returned to earth, that he never died and never rose again. Therefore, he is not the Son of God, but only a servant of Allah. Isa will also confirm that during his first coming he already pointed to the prophet Muhammad.⁶ Then the picture becomes clear: The antichrist of the Bible will, through signs and

1 There are some theological differences between the Sunnites and Shiites. The first group gives Isa the most important role. He will defeat ‘the antichrist’ (= according to the Bible the returning Christ!) and rule the world after the Mahdi dies. The Mahdi is not a prophet but as a political ruler, he can be compared with a Caliph. According to the Shiites the role of the Mahdi is more important than the role of Isa. They believe the Mahdi will kill the antichrist of Islam.

2 Hadith of Al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar.

3 II Cor. 4:4.

4 Is it possible that in this way the Islam will conquer (part of) Europe in the last days?

5 Quran s. 4:159.

6 Islam suggests that John the Baptist spoke the words of Mark 1:7 to point to Muhammad, while the Bible speaks in the following verses specifically about Jesus Christ. If the Islamic interpretation were true, John 4:21 would be referring to Mecca as the place of future worship instead of Israel. In John 14:16-17, the Comforter would be speaking about the future Muhammad, who would receive the Quran from the angel Gabriel, who is seen in the Quran as the Holy Spirit. See *Development of the Muslim Attitude to the Bible, Early Islam: Collected Articles*, W.M. Watt, p. 73.

miracles, be seen by mankind as sent by God. A whole masquerade will seem to confirm this¹.

We repeat, the antichrist will not appear as evil at first, but as a miracle worker and a great political leader and peacemaker. The Bible says that even the chosen-ones would be deceived if this were possible.² In this context we can understand that the potential for deception is enormous. But the Church of Christ cannot be deceived anymore. She will be with her Bridegroom. While very many on earth are deceived, others will start to remember that the behavior of the antichrist of the Bible, as well as the timing of his appearance and that of the false prophet (the beginning of the last Year week) have been predicted by the Bible. They will listen to the angel of God who brings the good news in a supernatural way, as the Book of Revelation describes. They will refuse to follow the false prophet and the Book of Revelation teaches that they will be martyred.

Many religious people will be deceived in a short period of time by the antichrist and the false prophet, certainly because the antichrist (Mahdi) is supported by Isa, a christ-like prophetic figure. The Muslims will recognize the story, but many people from other religions will also think they are recognizing “their messiah” and acknowledge him³ immediately.

Although the Quran describes that the Muslims will conquer a large region, including Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula, and (part of) Europe⁴, the Quran also describes that Rome will be the center of the Western power. This probably points to the Roman Catholic Church with its center in Rome. It is likely that the last real empire that will be formed before the coming of Jesus Christ will be a physical empire, or even more likely, that all the major world regions will come under one single umbrella.⁵

1 *Sunan Abu Dawud Book 37, Nr. 4310* by Abu Huraira. See the characteristics of how he will look in an earlier footnote of the previous page.

2 Matt. 24:24 “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” See also Mark 13:22 and Rev. 13.

3 See the book: *The Awaited Savior*, prologue of Ayatullah Baqir al-Sadr & Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari: “The Christians and Jews will see him and acknowledge his true status.” See also Quran s. 4:159.

4 In Daniel’s vision, silver comes forth from gold and bronze from silver. In the same manner, iron comes forth from bronze. If we follow the common interpretation that iron is the Roman Empire, then we have to conclude that the Roman Empire *does not* come from the Greek Empire for the most part. It is therefore more suitable to identify the left leg of iron as the East-Roman Empire, which coincides much more with the Greek Empire and afterwards the Ottoman Empire. Today’s Turkey is looking to revive the Ottoman Empire. It is also one of the countries that, according to the interpretation of many Bible scholars of Ezekiel chapter 38, will go to war with Israel. Western Europe is to be seen more as the right iron leg, the West-Roman Empire.

5 In Rev. 17 it speaks of 10 kings that give their power to the beast.

Most likely there will be a financial-economic world government, while at the same time, a political focus will be placed on many events in the Middle East. The Quran paints a picture of the last seven years in such a way that the antichrist of the Bible will use this to get the Muslim world behind him. Islam will have great power in these days and the people committed to this religion are already convinced of that ever-rising global power.¹ In this way, the attitude of Iraq against the West can be interpreted and understood. In no way will Iraq and the Islamic world as a whole bow down to make compromises with the West. Islam is increasingly aware of how their domination is growing while expecting the last imam. In addition, Islam sees the West as evil, as the embodiment of Satan². Eventually the antichrist will rise above all religions and many will think to recognize aspects of their own religion. Another conclusion is not possible because the Bible states that the “whole world will follow him.” This includes very many left-behind *religious* Christians, as well as Jews³. All devout Muslims will certainly follow him in that first part of the last week of years. This general acceptance cannot be the case if the antichrist were to present himself only as a Muslim.

However, the story is not finished yet; according to Islam, at the end of the period of seven years, their form of the antichrist shall appear. They call him the Dajjal, or the imposter⁴ and Islamic eschatology states that the Jews will recognize this person as their Messiah⁵. Again we have to be alert. Based on their scriptures, Muslims will mark our biblical Messiah Jesus Christ at His return immediately as their type of antichrist and all followers of the Mahdi and of Isa will go to war with Him. The antichrist will then have all the major world religions behind him. This war described by Islam is the same as when Jesus Christ returns as King to the world and conquers the Beast and the false prophet.⁶ We repeat: At His coming, the real Messiah will be fought by Islam as the anti-messiah figure. But the Bible tells that Satan will then

1 Hadith of Jabir bin Samurah, no. 2028 states that the Muslims will conquer the Arabic Peninsula, and Persia and (part of) Europe from Christianity, after they have conquered Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey), the center of ancient Christianity. (Hadith collection Al-Hakin, Al- Mustadrak, volume 4, page 508). Only after that time the Dajjal, the antichrist of Islam, will come.

2 With America and Israel as “the great and little Satan.”

3 The Jews will only start rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem after their Messiah has come, but the Book of Daniel shows that this temple will really be built in the time of the antichrist and with his permission. Many Jews will have to be deceived to wrongly see this anti-christ as their messiah, but they will never accept Islam as their new religion. Maybe they will accept a world religion in which all religions can recognize their own identity.

4 Al-Dajjal Al-Masih is, according to Islam, the ‘false messiah’.

5 The Dajjal has only one eye according to Islam.

6 Rev. 19.

have been revealed as the one who tried to manipulate the times and tried to hinder and stop God's plan with this world.

Again, in summary, not every knee will bow immediately when Jesus Christ comes from Heaven as King of kings and descends on the Mount of Olives. First, there will be a short awful war¹, the battle of Armageddon². Then it will become clear for all people on earth who the real Messiah is, and who the antichrist is. Then Jesus Christ will establish His Kingdom on the earth.

With the return of Jesus Christ not every knee
will bow immediately

The story of the Dajjal as anti-redeemer who, according to the Quran, will be sent at the end of the seven years, also gives us more insight in the confusion and deception that will have arisen by that time.

The Bible and the Quran don't differ very much in regard to their descriptions of all the disasters that will happen during the last period on the earth. Both speak of serious famines, earthquakes, chaos, and moral decline. At the end of this period, however, the Bible says that before the real Return of Jesus Christ, a Beast will arise³ that will attack and attempt to destroy the people of Israel.⁴ The Quran teaches the opposite; it describes that Allah sends this beast (who can speak to people, just like the Bible says), to destroy the unbelievers!⁵

According to the Quran, these unbelievers are people who don't follow Islam. The beast⁶ sent by Allah will write the word "Kafir" (unbeliever) on the foreheads of the unbelievers.⁷ This is quite reminiscent of what the Bible predicts about the ones who will not worship the beast: They will be killed.⁸ The Bible teaches that the beast will

¹ Rev. 19:17-21, 16:16.

² In Joel 3:2 it says that God will gather all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is very possible that this is a valley near Jerusalem, but according to others it is also possible that this word is a derivative of the valley of judgement of Yahweh, near Megiddo.

³ Another appearance of Satan (Rev. 12:9 & 13:1-8) who will try to destroy the people of Israel.

⁴ Read more in Rev. 12:13-18 and Rev. 13. The Bible describes this beast as a monster with political, military and economic characteristics.

⁵ Quran s. 27:52 and many Hadith of Abu Hairara (4554, 7039, 6924, 6979).

⁶ Arabic: "Al-Daabah". It is not clear how Islam describes this beast exactly.

⁷ Here the Bible also shows a mirror image and speaks in Rev. 14 about the redeemed, with the name of the Father and of the Lamb written on their foreheads.

⁸ See Rev. 13:8.

place a mark on the heads of the ones whose names are not written in the Book of Life. The Bible says that no one will be able to buy or sell anything¹ without that mark. It is an instrument that will keep people completely in the power of the one who placed that devilish mark.

We understand now from the Quran and Islamic tradition that they are already warning against, without calling him by name, the real Jesus Christ Who will come as the Son of God. When He returns, the Muslims will call him the Dajjal, the anti-redeemer. This will be very confusing because seven years before this event, Muslims will have welcomed their Jesus (Isa) as messiah and will let him testify against Christians and Jews. Islamic writings warn that someone will come at the end of the seven years who will proclaim to be the messiah, and that He will proclaim the good (of Islam) as evil and evil as good. The Paradise that He preaches, according to Islam, is in fact hell, while His hell is, in fact, Islamic paradise. It looks like we have returned to the situation in the Garden of Eden where a demonic being questioned the validity of His Word. In this manner, the Muslims are already being prepared in their thinking for the moment that Jesus Christ really returns at the end of the seven years and will unmask the antichrist and the false prophet who was presented as Isa. The Bible says that Satan knows that his time is short.² He will try until the end to prevent the establishment of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ on earth, especially by deceiving the Jews and destroying them and many others if necessary. But it will all be in vain.

According to the Islamic Hadith, a lot of women (because of his miracles), nomads (because of their ignorance), and Jews (because of their greed) will follow the Dajjal. According to one Hadith³, the Islamic antichrist (or Dajjal) will be killed by the Islamic Isa, the son of Mary, in a battle. This battle will take place around the city of Lod⁴, around the location of the nowadays Ben Gurion International Airport of Israel. The Bible speaks of the Battle of Armageddon that will take place when Jesus Christ descends as King to the earth and fights and destroys Satan there. A large part of Israel will most likely be the battlefield.

Conclusion: while studying the Islamic writings, Christians, who believe that the Bible is truly God's Word and that Jesus Christ will return as the Son of God, get

¹ Rev. 13:16-17.

² See Rev. 12:12 as an example.

³ Hadith of An-Nawwas bin Sam'am.

⁴ In Arabic Al-Lud, known in the New Testament by the Greek name Lydda.

a clear picture how the antichrist will most likely behave himself and deceive the people on earth. They gain insight regarding whom he will use and which deceiving strategies he will use in that last period of seven years before Christ returns.

Humanity, especially superficially religious people, will be shown a mirror image that has links with many religions, and they will be utterly confused. Not only the Muslims and the religious Christians who have remained behind on earth, but also a part of the Jews, will play a major role in this scenario. However, with their knowledge of the Torah and the prophets, and from their (historic) relationship with Islam, another part of the Jews that have discernment and a clearly formed picture will see that Islam cannot bring forth their Messiah.¹

Many Jews are expecting their Messiah around this period, for we have arrived at the end of the 6th day. Knowing that with God 1000 years is like a day, they expect their Messiah at the beginning of the 7th day, His Great Sabbath. When Jesus Christ came to the earth the first time, they did not recognize Him as Messiah, but now they long for His coming. At the same time and as stated earlier, it is very possible that many Jews will also be deceived by the antichrist who will appear earlier than the real Messiah, but who will take on the appearance of a messiah. These Jews are first of all deceived because they will be allowed to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem² by the antichrist. This breakthrough that they have longed to see for so many years will, at first, be their “proof” that this person has to be the expected Messiah.

We also know that halfway through the seven-year period, which at the same time will also be the middle of the 70th week of Daniel,³ the antichrist will declare himself god in the temple of Jerusalem.⁴ This most likely means that in the first half of the

1 This is so for the main part. Earlier in this chapter we saw that some Jewish scholars from the prestigious Sanhedrin choose for an Interfaith approach, and therefore open up to the recognition of a messiah. This messiah is also seen by the Islam as messiah, because they believe that they share each other's roots of faith.

2 The Temple Institute in Jerusalem has prepared the building and furnishings of that temple. And they are of the opinion that the temple will be allowed to be rebuild before the coming of the Messiah, based on Mal. 3:1, the writings of Maimonides (letter about religious persecution), the Jerusalem Talmud (Ma'aser Sheni 29) and the MiDarash Yalkut Shimoni (Isaiah 499). Maimonides explains that the building will take place at the coming of the Messiah (see his “Laws of the kings”). See also: templeinstitute.org.

3 See Dan. 9:24-27.

4 In the main book of Wake Up! it is described that the return of Yeshua can be expected on a future Day of Atonement, when this feast will be fulfilled. If that is the case, then 3 ½ years earlier we find ourselves in the period of **Pesach**. Can it be that the antichrist will place himself in the temple in Jerusalem as God (Daniel 9:27), exactly during the feast when all Jews will be visiting the temple because of the feast and exactly on the day of Pesach, referring to the feast where the Bible teaches us that on that day Yeshua brought victory through His Atoning Sacrifice?

seven years, the latter group of Jews will also be blinded by the miracles and signs, and only later will they see the grim reality.

We reiterate our thesis that this antichrist evidently will be above all religions, because religious Jews will not take instructions from an Islamic leader. Until now, the building of the third temple has been impossible because of the resistance of the Muslim world. For them, the Al-Aqsa mosque is one of the most holy places and they won't tolerate a Jewish Temple next to it or in its place.

The anti-christ will be above all religions and
perform signs and miracles.

Islam gives us additional information from which we can derive possible ways the Jews will become convinced that this Mahdi has a link with or is identical to their long-awaited Messiah. The Hadith teach us that the Mahdi will lead the people to a mountain in Syria where he will reveal the “missing” parts of the Torah. These unknown parts of the Torah probably will convince many Jews that the Mahdi is right. This Mahdi will also make it possible for the lost Ark of the Covenant¹, known from the Old Testament,² to be “rediscovered.” The goal and result is that many Jews will therefore acknowledge that Islam, or more likely, the world religion of that time, is the faith they should submit to.³



In 2010 this advertisement was written on 200 buses: “May the Holy Temple soon be rebuilt in our days.” Next to this text was a picture of the 3rd temple. Their messianic expectation is high!

1 According the Hadith it would be situated at the lake of Galilee in North-Israel. The lake of Galilee is close to Sham, and this word means (in the end-time scenario of the Hadith) “something that is far away, far from Mekka and Medina”.

2 The Muslims are convinced that the Ark of the Covenant is the basis of Islam.

3 *Al Mahdi and the end of Time* by Muhammed ibn Izzat, Muhammed Arif (London Dar Al-Taqla, 1997) pages 16 and 40.

Conclusion:

Studying the Interfaith movement, the tendencies amongst the Jews, as well as the picture that Islam creates about this last period, we see very similar patterns, albeit with other players. This apparent similarity should be there to make the end time scenario of the antichrist acceptable for many. The deception of the enemy, in the form of twisting and masquerading of the key figures, will come to its climax in the last week of years of the end times¹. If one doesn't discern now, one will most certainly be deceived then.

Even the elect would be deceived, if possible!

We should therefore be more watchful than ever. Even now, and growing stronger under Pope Francis, an image is being created that Christians, Muslims and Jews all serve the same God. This conviction is certainly present within the postmodern Christian approach. Under the leadership of the current Pope, the Roman Catholic Church seems to teach that the gospel of repentance should give way² to mutual love amongst all people. Another prominent currently held perspective is that everyone has to follow their own conscience and make their own choices about right and wrong. Again, in this overbridging context, a large number of believers in the world are being made ready for a world religion, which will help to ensure that the twisted end times scenario will be acceptable. At the same time, all these elements will create a world that is desperately seeking peace, to hardly be open for the real end times scenario of the Bible. In every main religion, mindsets are already being prepared so people will welcome the anti-christ as the "christ figure." When soon the night has fallen and no one can work (to proclaim the gospel), we see how important it is that an angel of God will supernaturally bring the eternal gospel to deceived people in all the corners of the world in that last year-week, one last time. Not even the antichrist will be able to stop him. However, not all will listen to this angel and those people probably will take the mark of the beast.

One question is how the foolish virgins from the parable of Matthew 25 will calculate this situation, when the door of the Wedding is closed and there are no longer wise virgins present to accurately and completely explain the Biblical truth. The Bible is clear about this. Even the elect would be deceived, *if possible*³. That last part is very

1 As the English saying goes, "The devil is in the tail."

2 La Repubblica, interview by Eugenio Scalfari with Pope Francis on October 1st 2013. The Pope indicated that the conversion of people (red. often called proselytism) is of no use and he pleaded for religious ecumenicalism and dialogue with unbelievers. Everyone should be encouraged to follow what he or she thinks is right.

3 Matt. 24:24.

important because the Rapture of the Bride will make it impossible for her to be deceived. Without the Rapture, the Bride could be deceived. The same Rapture will also open the way for the man of perdition¹ to make deception complete, without being hindered by the true salt of the earth, by the Spirit who works powerfully in His ecclesia, the Bride.

Common ground between Islam and Christianity

Within the Christian world, reactions to Islam vary. It is a religion as well as a political doctrine that has also spread her influence in the West. Some Western movements assume the best and that eventually all religions will take humanity to the same place.² The Interfaith movement is growing in strength³ due to the mindset that “religions should look for common ground.” It is not a surprise that the World Council of Churches is continually looking for common ground with Islam, while simultaneously the Council is very critical towards Israel.

The initiative to unite all religions not only comes from some pioneers in the Christian corner, but also from a number of Islamic groups. In 2007, a declaration was written by more than 100 Muslim scholars⁴, in which they confirmed the existence of common ground between Muslims and Christians. This is based on the two most important commandments of the Bible and the Quran: Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself. Many Christian denominations have responded agreeably to this open letter⁵ addressed to all leaders of Western Christian denominations. And it is true; the two religions have certain values in common which could achieve peace in the world. But the love for God and your neighbor is clearly defined differently in the Bible than in the Quran, and we observe the very different applications of it in daily life. Both Islamic groups as well as a lot of church groups, who welcomed this Interfaith initiative, assume that “both books of revelation” (the Bible and the Quran), although different, point to the same God.⁶

But the Muslims who signed this Initiative still have the (Quranic) opinion that Christians are dealing with an older (but very corrupted) book that does not contain

¹ II Thess. 2:3-8.

² We know better by now.

³ See as an example the foundation started by Tony Blair, former prime minister of England, for this purpose.

⁴ “A Common Word between Us and You”. See the text on www.acommonword.com

⁵ Published in the New York Times in a few editions in the autumn of 2007.

⁶ See also the book: *A Common Word, Muslims and Christians on Loving God and neighbor*, Miroslav Wolf, Ghazi bin Muhammed, Melissa Arrington (preface by Tony Blair), 2010, Eerdmans Publishing co, UK. Website: www.yale.edu

the complete truth. In their view, the same God would have told Muhammad the real story in the 7th century. This is why Muslims believe that the Quran has the full truth. They believe that the God of the Bible revealed new information to Muhammad, which wasn't revealed in the Old and New Testament. However, these revelation deviate from biblical information. By now we realize that it's impossible to hold onto the idea that the same God with the same purpose and the same calendar portrays the events of the end times in both books *in scenarios that are each other's opposite*. Apart from the opposite views regarding the identity of Jesus (in the Quran, Allah declares not to have a son, and he therefore denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God), the information given above is crucial, to be able to judge the common ground between the Bible and the Quran. Especially now that we are on the eve of the end times.

Where some think to find common ground in the two central commandments, there is certainly no common ground in many other areas of faith. According to Islam, the Mahdi and Isa (their Jesus) will fight the Muslims and Christians that won't follow the Quran completely. We repeat, at the very moment that the Bible predicts the real Return of Jesus Christ in the darkest period of history, Muslims expect their type of antichrist, the Dajjal. The Quran and Hadith very explicitly describe a situation in which the *only* common ground in this deciding climax of the end times can be found **under the rule of Islam**. Alert Christians cannot come to any other conclusion than that the Allah of Islam cannot be the same God of the Bible. There are many reasons for this, one being that each religion sees the other's antichrist as their own messiah and vice versa.

We can therefore not understand why very prominent and popular Christian leaders (please check the document) have signed the "common ground" declaration mentioned above, emphasizing that the God of the Bible and the Allah of the Quran are the same.

You can **download** the pdf of the document on that website www.acommonword.com containing all the signatories of the 5-year anniversary of this declaration.

Obviously for these Christian leaders it is no longer a critical issue that Islam does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or that Islam considers the Messiah of the Bible as a deceiver and an antichrist. Do they think that this is just a small difference of opinion that will be nullified later on? That this crucial Biblical truth has become a secondary difference of opinion is unbelievable, but also typical of these times.

We see the same thing happening in Europe and the geo-political effects will be disastrous. We know that adhering to truth of the Deity of Jesus Christ our Savior, who came to earth in the form of man, to be our Redeemer, is becoming ever more a stumbling block that needs to be removed before the (predicted) common world religion can be created.

Jesus Christ as Son of God is the last stumbling
block before there can be a world religion

Should we leave some room for ignorance, as some Christian leaders perhaps have not taken the time to compare the Bible Book of Revelation with the Islamic Hadith? Neither source is hidden nor secret and they can both easily¹ be consulted. For many believers the question remains as to why so many Christian leaders are ignoring these fundamental differences. Is it possible that many well-known Christian leaders, who are working together for a common world religion, also reject or allegorize many real Biblical prophecies or deem them not important?

We know that there is spiritual warfare going on in heavenly places, and in this e-book we have tried to describe the war that will rage between God and Satan, especially in that last week of the seven years. How could it be otherwise! From the main book we can understand that the time until the heavenly Wedding has become very short. The Bride wants to use this remaining time to show others that the coming of the Bridegroom is near.

At the same time, the Bible teaches us to look at others from God's perspective. Some Christians are scared of the influence of Islam, but do they have contact with Muslims, who often share space in their lives, perhaps living in their neighborhoods? Do we speak to or pray for Muslims in our surroundings, and are we compassionate about their spiritual situation? Those who don't have or seek spiritual discernment will simply identify with that other religion, and/or seek for the common ground. But everyone who in daily life avoids any contact with people of other religions will never get the chance to show God's Plan to those who think differently. We hope that these two books will help you to "Wake Up!" and that your life and vision is altered forever, to the glory and honor of Him Who will very soon establish His Heavenly Kingdom on earth.

¹ In Psychology this can be understood as 'selective attention'. Some information is not perceived because consciously or unconsciously there was a choice being made to focus on something else.

Finally

God's calendar and the patterns He has placed in the Bible, have a central place in the main book and this additional e-book. The Church of Jesus Christ can look forward to the coming of the Bridegroom on the clouds with hope. Although we have not focused on setting a date, we have seen that God controls the times and appoints them as well. God has established His calendar!

Readers of the main book know that we don't have to accept the seemingly disappointing saying that "nobody knows the day nor the hour" of His coming. For it is exactly this saying that points us to the pattern of the Biblical feasts, and to the deep meaning of the ancient Wedding ritual. Will those who are not watchful and don't want to acknowledge the signs of the times, still long for His coming? We have also understood from the first chapter of Acts that the argument to see His coming as only "spiritual" does not make any sense, and that the Biblical-Hebrew exegesis shows a completely different interpretation; He will return to Jerusalem *the same way* He ascended.

The hope of the Bride is always focused on the coming of her Bridegroom and as the time comes near, the preparation is ever more focused on that upcoming day. This doesn't mean the Bride is waiting passively, but it means that she is focused on His coming in all her preparations and actions. This very much includes preaching the gospel

To regain a correct view of the Kingdom, we only have to go back to our Way, Jesus Christ, and how He looked at the Biblical-Hebrew roots of our faith and lived them. It is time that we look at church history and again do the works of that first ecclesia of Acts, and more.

Today we would call the first church a messianic church¹. A clear understanding of the identity of the True Olive tree is the only way to rediscover the old truths, but then in their New Testament meaning. Those truths will be based on the very reliable shadows of the Old Testament, which clearly show the connection with the reality in Jesus Christ. Wake Up! and this additional e-book are written so that this reality becomes visible in our walk of discipleship. The goal is not for believers to start

¹ A church focused on the return of the Messiah and who knows her Messiah. A church where Jew and Greek come, pray, share and work *together*. See the difference with messianic churches of *only* non-Jewish believers who sometimes overemphasize the Jewish rituals and/or Israeli heritage or the churches that *only* consist of Jewish believers in Yeshua.

“behaving like Jews,” for in matters of salvation the one new man is neither Jew nor Greek, but he is a new creation in Jesus Christ. This new man seeks to understand the New Covenant meaning in Christ of all the Old Testament shadows, types, and patterns. God’s Word is pure, but our old concepts are often murky due to varying winds of doctrine that have blown through the churches during the past centuries. This is why we have to be critical about church history and the mindset of the church of today, but always with an attitude of love for the Church of Christ and its members.

In these latter days, the shofar of the month of Elul will sound in the “month” before the Feast of Trumpets. In a New Covenant context, this shofar warns that the coming of the Bridegroom is near. He will be the King of kings. We live prophetically in this month of preparation where every day the shofar sounds for those who want to hear it!

We pray and hope that this book will be like a catalyst, causing you to continue and persevere in your search for the crystal clear water of God’s Word. Be assured that in Biblical-Hebrew thinking, every question is usually followed by another question. Questions support our search, as long as we are willing to find, with the Spirit’s help, God’s own relevant answers in the Bible. We meet our God in the Scriptures He has given us, and sometimes we have to dig deeper and put the words of those Scriptures back into context.

We will continue to study the Scriptures to understand more. We realize that we don’t have all the answers. If you think you have more insight or revelation about the Bible passages that we have described and/or quoted in the main book or the e-book, please let us know! If it turns out that we have been incomplete, then we ask you to look at our intention to expect and serve Him more than ever. Appropriate additions will be gratefully referenced in later editions.

To all the readers who have read the main book superficially, may we please advise you to read it again and also study the footnotes? We hope and pray that in this way the timelines, patterns, shadows and Biblical feasts will become even more a part of your own thinking and New Covenant discipleship. May the Bible speak to your heart in new ways!

For regularly updated and additional information please go to the Wake Up Website (www.wakeup.community)