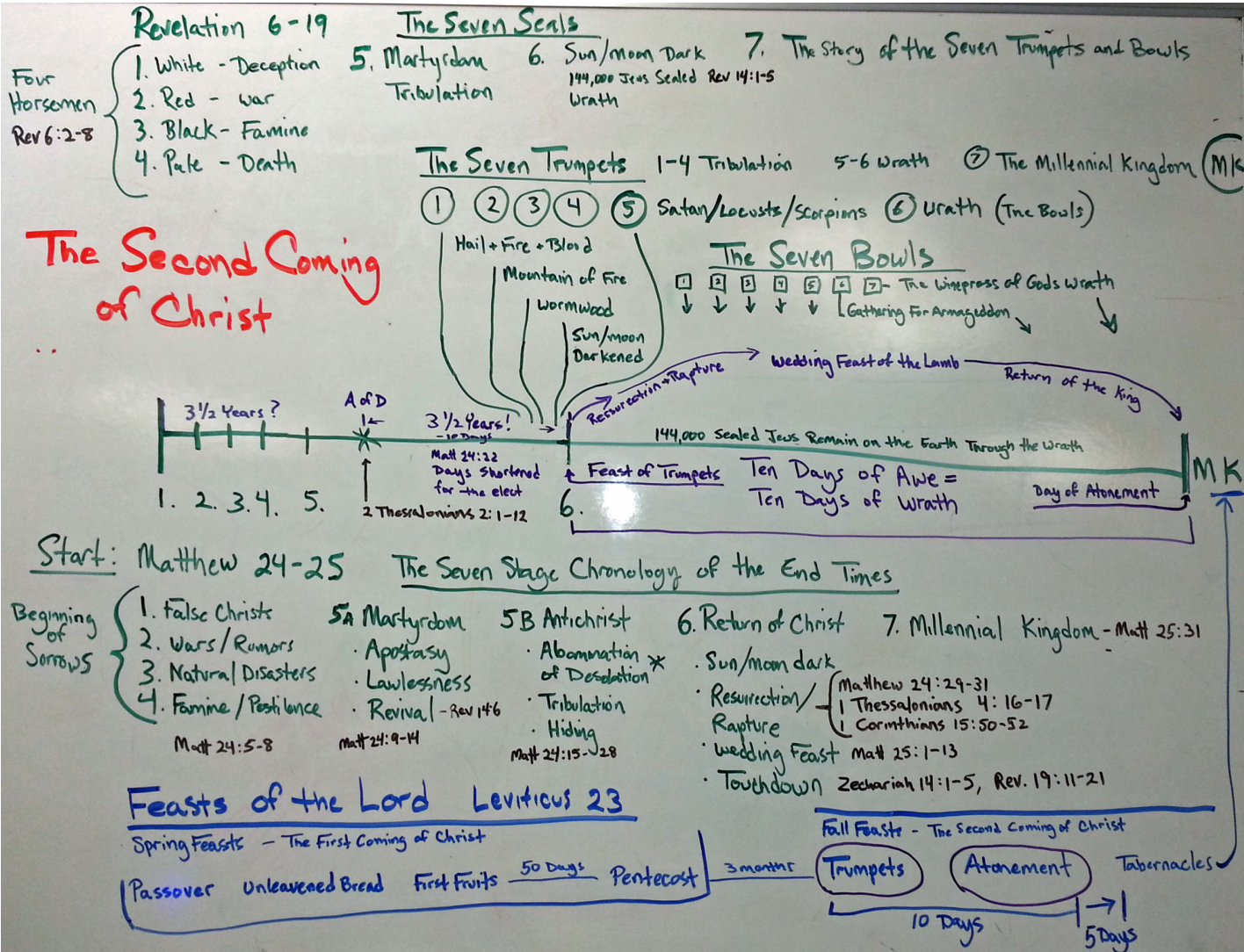


# The Second Witness 7/26/2015

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Volume 1, Issue 3



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It is our plan to publish two to four times per month. An archive of past issues is available [here](#).

## What Jesus Taught the Apostles about the Last Days

### The Olivet Discourse is the Bible's "Decoder Ring" for Prophecy

"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals'" Revelation 5:2-5.

Prophecy of the end times is a complex topic that is interwoven throughout the entire Bible. Where should we begin the process of unraveling its mysteries?

Not the Old Testament. Why? Because we are disciples of Christ, following in the footsteps of His Apostles. While it is impossible in my view to understand prophecy at anything more than a superficial level without also studying the Old Testament, a Christian's first and primary guide must be Jesus, not Moses, Daniel, Ezekiel or any other Old Testament figure.

Not the Book of Revelation. Why? Because Revelation was delivered to and written by the Apostle John in about 95AD, long after the rest of the Apostles has passed on the teachings of Jesus to their disciples (including His teaching on the end times) and most or all of them had passed on to Glory. Importantly, as we will see, the Book of Revelation is in large part a supplement to and best interpreted in light of what Jesus had already taught.

## **The Olivet Discourse**

I believe the starting point for the study of the end times must be the instruction given by Jesus to the disciples in response to their direct question "*when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*" (Matthew 24:3)

His answer, called the Olivet Discourse, or "The Lecture on the Mount of Olives," is (in a natural reading of the text) a point by point chronological summary of end-time events which is repeated with only slight variation in the Gospels of Matthew (Chapter 24), Mark (Chapter 13) and Luke (Chapter 21), and reiterated in an expanded and annotated fashion in the Book of Revelation.

For the purpose our analysis, Matthew's account is most helpful, because the apparent chronological nature of Jesus' teaching continues through Chapter 25, ending with a glimpse at the Millennial Kingdom.

Importantly, Chapters 24-25 are clearly identified by Matthew as a single package, opening with the disciples' query about the end times (24:3) and closing with Matthew's segue of 26:1: "*...when Jesus had finished all these sayings...*"

"All of these sayings" that we read between Matthew 24:3 and 26:1 should thus be viewed as a set of lessons delivered together, explaining the events of the last days in a manner most relevant to His disciples. He is in essence saying "This is what my followers will see with their own eyes and what they must watch for during the last days."

In order of occurrence, Jesus listed 12 events that are recorded in the three Gospels:

1. False Christs
2. Wars and rumors of war
3. Earthquakes (natural disasters)
4. Famines/Pestilence
5. Martyrdom
6. Apostasy
7. Gospel preached to the whole world
8. Antichrist revealed/Abomination of Desolation
9. Great Tribulation
10. Sun and Moon darkened (after the tribulation)
11. Return of Christ (in the clouds)

## 12. Resurrection/Rapture

These 12 events unfold in six stages, followed by a seventh: the Millennial Kingdom, as I have laid out in my chart: The Second Coming of Christ.

In Revelation, Jesus provided much more information about how these events unfold, and how they relate to Old Testament prophecies. He first unsealed the events in a summary form, and we can see that the first six seals follow the exact pattern of the Gospel accounts. I have added my own conjecture about what this might look like in a present day context.

Seal #1 White Horse (The Antichrist spirit, bearing the symbol of the bow -- rainbow -- begins accumulating power, conquering the world through guile and deception).

Seal #2. Red Horse (Wars and rumors of wars trigger massive political upheavals which in turn trigger global economic collapse)

Seal #3 Black Horse (Global breakdown of social order results in widespread famine and starvation. Natural disasters compound the problems).

Seal #4. Pale Horse (Disease, pestilence, genocide, sectarian massacres, wild animals, etc kill many millions of people).

Seal #5. Martyrs Under the Altar: describing the tribulation, including martyrdom, apostasy, the great end-times revival (of the remnant of true believers who preach the Gospel to the entire world), the exposure of the Antichrist, and the “great tribulation” under his evil reign. The martyrdom is exemplified by beheadings of Christians (which likely occur on a massive scale by Islamists who take advantage of the global chaos to rampage against all “infidels”).

The fifth seal represents the time of great testing in which the sheep and goats are divided, and the final generation of believers prove their allegiance to Christ by “enduring” under suffering without renouncing Him (which is the recurring theme and exhortation of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3).

Seal #6 Return of Christ. The coming of the groom to rescue His bride is announced by the darkening of the sun and the moon. He appears in the clouds and sends His angels to gather His elect from the four corners of the world. The dead will be resurrected and rise first, and then we who are alive will join them in the air (per 1 Thessalonians 4:15-15 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

Seal #7 is not a subsequent event, but a broader and more detailed overview of what was summarized in the first six seals. Importantly, it contains the story of the Seven Trumpets the first three of which occur during the time span of the 5th Seal, the next three of which occur during the 6th Seal, and the final trumpet which announces the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

The Seven Bowls of God’s Wrath all occur during the time span of the 5th and 6th Trumpets.

In other words, like a “wheel within a wheel” the Seventh Seal contains the Seven Trumpets, which in turn contain the Seven Bowls.

### **When is the Rapture?**

A natural reading of the Olivet Discourse does not support the majority “pre-tribulation rapture” view,

which I frankly don't find much support for anywhere in the Bible.

Jesus said *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"* Matthew 24:29-31.

However, I don't hold to the classic "post-trib" or "mid-trib" position either, but have taken a Hebrew Roots perspective and believe the key to unraveling the timing of end-time events is in Leviticus 23 and 25, the instructions on God's timekeeping system and His seven annual feasts.

I will expand on this presentation in the next article and provide all relevant scriptures, but in short, the seven feasts are designed as "dress rehearsals" for the first and second coming of Christ. The spring feasts, Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and Pentecost were fulfilled by Jesus 2000 years ago. The fall feasts Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles will soon be fulfilled at His second coming.

The resurrection/rapture to meet Christ in the air will occur on Trumpets (the feast whose starting date "no man can know the date or hour of"). This date marks the end of the Great Tribulation (the trial) and beginning of the Wrath of God (the sentence on the guilty).

The "touchdown" of Christ to earth will occur ten days later on the Day of Atonement.

During that 10 Days of Awe (as it is called by the Jews) the Bride of Christ, in newly glorified bodies in the spiritual realm, will celebrate the Wedding Feast of the Lamb (Matthew 22:1-2, 25:1-13; Revelation 19:7-8) and then have our works tested (1 Corinthians 3:11-15) to determine our role in the Millennial Kingdom.

Meanwhile, three groups of people who were "left behind" on earth at the rapture (the wicked, the 144,000 Jews sealed against death (Revelation 7:4-8), and the foolish virgins of Matthew 25) must endure the Wrath of God, including the seven bowl judgments.

On the Day of Atonement, Christ will lead the Host of Heaven (including the Bride) in a dramatic rescue of Jerusalem and slaughter of His enemies as He returns to claim His throne Revelation 19:11-21; Zechariah 14:1-5).

Five days later, on the Feast of Tabernacles, the Millennial Kingdom begins.

### **Can we know the day?**

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (Matthew 24:36)

What at first glance appears to be a warning against "date-setting" in Matthew 24:36 is actually a clue as to the date of the resurrection and rapture.

Importantly, the Feast of Trumpets was known by the Jews of antiquity as the feast of which no man could know the day or hour# because the official start of the feast required a ruling by the Jewish religious court, the Sanhedrin, upon the testimony of two witnesses assigned to watch for the night sky for the first appearance of the new moon. There was enough ambiguity about the official start,

therefore, that no one could predict in advance what date the feast would begin. There are numerous Messianic Jewish websites which address this point, one of which I found particularly useful:  
<http://hatikva.org/no-man-knows-the-day-or-the-hour.html>

In other words, the phrase “no man knows the day or hour” was a Jewish idiom meaning The Feast of Trumpets.

That believers can and should know the day is made clear in 1 Thessalonians 5.1-6

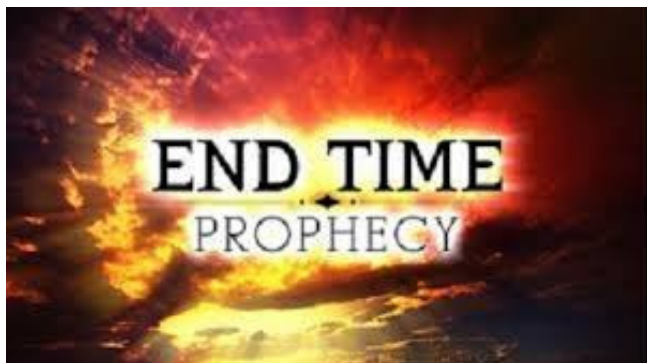
*“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”*

The phrase “...but My father only” in Matthew 24:36 is a separate Jewish idiom related to the timing of the arrival of the Bridegroom for the wedding feast. The resurrection and rapture marks the start of the wedding feast -- or perhaps more accurately the start of the final preparation for the wedding feast. The Bride of Christ, the church, in glorified bodies, ascends into the clouds where the Bridegroom has arrived for the ceremony.

That's all I can include in this issue. Interesting stuff, don't you think?

Blessings,

Dr. Scott Lively



Fundamentals of End-Time Prophecy

### ***Eschatology 101A***

***A Certificate Program of Redemption Gate Bible College***

***In the Spring of 2015, I developed a 5-week class on prophecy for Redemption Gate Bible College. This newsletter will feature the material from that class over the next year as I work to refine and strengthen it for use as a correspondence course. To that end I solicit your input.***

***The original course featured 35 questions (seven in each class session) which were asked and answered during an interactive discussion period.***

***We will address one or more of those (and likely additional) questions each week in this segment of the newsletter.***



# Session 1: The Context for Understanding Prophecy

(Questions 2 of 7)

## 2. Who Can Be A Prophet?

*“[Yahweh] said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.’” Numbers 12:6*

*“It will come about after that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-18).*

Prophets had always been part of Hebrew society and did not suddenly arise with Samuel, who is often called the First Prophet because he founded the School of the Prophets during the reign of King Saul (1 Samuel 19:20).

The office and ministry of the prophet continued in Christianity

*“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).*

Remember, that in Question 1 we defined prophecy as “the truth of God that bubbles forth like a fountain of living water from a person under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”

In Acts 2:17-18 Peter invoked Joel 2:28-29 to explain that those who were speaking in tongues were not drunk but were prophesying by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Both men and women can be prophets and age is no barrier either.

Remember also there are three forms of prophecy: predicting the future, ecstatic expression usually in song, and repeating or clarifying what God has already revealed in His Word.

If the form of prophecy is speaking forth the Word of God in speech or song is a repetition of what God has already revealed, virtually anyone can do it. Such expression is a common part of Christian life.

Worshipping in song is in a sense a form of prophecy, as is quoting a Bible verse to someone.

However, if the prophecy is in the nature of a new revelation by God, only those to whom He has specifically spoken in a dream or vision are permitted to speak it. Indeed, to purport to speak for God without such authorization was a capital offence in the Old Testament:

*“But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die” (Deuteronomy 18:20).*

Notice that this prohibition includes speaking a truth of God but attributing it to a false God. A common modern example of this is seen among so-called “New Agers,” who attribute Biblical values to Buddhism, Hinduism and other religions in an attempt to syncretize them or claim that all religious paths lead to heaven.

A parallel warning in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 appears to be a warning against Islam, which teaches that

Jesus will appear in the last days to tell Christians to follow Mohammed.

*“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. “You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him. “But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God...”*

The Bible warns us specifically: *“if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him. “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect”* (Matthew 23:23-24).

A false prophet is not just a prophet whose predictions fail to come to pass. It is anyone whose expression in the name of God deviates in any way from the truth of God, or which speaks for a false god, even if the statement is factually true or the prediction comes to pass.

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and most other leading prophets stated clearly that they received a special calling from God, perhaps to distinguish themselves from the professional prophets, some of whom discredited themselves by making false prophecies, usually to please rulers and other prominent men.

### **Who, then, can be a Prophet?**

Our preferred answer is: Anyone who receives special revelation from God in the form of a dream or vision, or who accurately repeats or reaffirms the truth of the Bible in speech or song.

### **A Few Housekeeping Items**

I am pretty-much a one-man show and run two highly active ministry organizations. Because I maximize my time to achieve the greatest impact possible for the Kingdom of God, I value straight-to-the-point resources and communications. If you desire to communicate with me on any matter including this newsletter please be as concise as possible and please use email, not the telephone, even if you have my phone number (except in emergencies).

You may reach me at [scottlivelyministries@gmail.com](mailto:scottlivelyministries@gmail.com)

### **Donations**

I have always followed a policy of providing my writings and other self-created resources without charge whenever possible. However, my support, and that of both of the ministry organizations I run, rely upon donations to operate. For all matters related to my prophecy studies and writings donations should be sent to Redemption Gate Mission Society, PO Box 2373, Springfield, MA 01101 or online [here](#). If you want your donation to be designated for any specific purpose, just send me a note or an email to say so, otherwise it will be used where most needed.

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