

Sunday November 16th 2014  
From Here To Eternity  
Part Eight

1). Re 7:1 ¶ *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

a). As we had begun to see last time the mid-point in the Tribulation is marked by a series of interconnected events the likes of which have never been seen before, events that precipitate the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes for the ages.

b). And as we would expect from God's orchestrated timing from the past these events will take place at the precise moment that has been ordained for them – *Isa 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. 12 "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness: 13 I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.*

c). The events about to transpire, as we see from the verses from Revelation Chapter 7, are contingent upon the sealing of 'the servants of our God on their foreheads' – and we will notice from the description in these verses the extent of angelic activity in bringing these events to pass, remembering of course that the angels' activity can be seen as that of God Himself as they work under the fixed laws that He has established.

d). And it would be good to keep in mind as we begin to look at these events that everything is in accordance with God's purpose – there is no element of chance and nothing random, but all within God's perfect purpose.

e). In consequence that which He spoke to the Assyrian Pharaoh in the days of Moses equally applies to the kingdom of Antichrist which is about to reach its zenith - *Ex 9:16 "But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.*

f). And just as we had read in Isaiah Chapter 46 we find contained in the former things of old that which foreshadows these events in the future and which declare the absolute certainty of the accomplishment of God's purpose for the ages.

g). That which we see through Pharaoh in - *Ex 1:10 "come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land."*

And through Haman - *Es 3:8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from all other people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not fitting for the king to let them remain. 9 "If it pleases the king, let a decree be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring it into the king's treasuries." 10 So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people are given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."*

And through the Psalms and the prophets - *Ps 83:3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones. 4 They have said, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, That the name of Israel may be remembered no more." 5 For they have consulted together with one consent; They form a confederacy against You:*

*Eze 7:3 Now the end has come upon you, And I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways, And I will repay you for all your abominations.*

*Am 6:14 "But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel," Says the LORD God of hosts; "And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath To the Valley of the Arabah."*

All these things will come to their fulfillment at the hands of Antichrist, but only within the Divine purpose and parameters that God has set.

h). It may appear that Antichrist has his own agenda but the reality is that he is fulfilling God's agenda - *Jer 6:26 O daughter of my people, Dress in sackcloth And roll about in ashes! Make mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation; For the plunderer will suddenly come upon us. 27 "I have set you [the plunderer] as an assayer and a fortress among My people, That you may know and test their way.*

i). But as we have seen the sealing of the servants of God must come before the final outworking of God's purpose is brought to completion through the one called 'the plunderer' here in Jeremiah.

2). *Re 7:4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: 5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;*

a). The 144000 are 'the servants of our God' who are sealed on their foreheads and this number of those saved in Israel has been progressively produced through the ministry of the 2 witnesses, Moses and Elijah, during the first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.

b). The completion of this number also marks the completion of the ministry of the 2 witnesses, bringing their time to an end - *Re 11:3 ¶ "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

c). It is at this point we will remember that the supernatural protection given to the 2 witnesses is removed - *Re 11:5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire. 7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry,*

*and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

d). The witnesses are killed 'and their dead bodies lie in the streets of that great city...' for 3 ½ days.

e). We should note though that they are killed because God allows it and their death and subsequent resurrection are a continuation of God's plans not an interruption to them.

f). That which we see in v10 of Revelation 11 would apply to many in Israel as well as to the nations of the earth in general – and if we take the symbolism portrayed through Moses and Elijah – the complete Word of God – we will realize that the death of these 2 prophets marks one of the terminal points in Israel's history and has been foreshadowed through Paul's turning to the Gentiles at the conclusion of the Book of Acts - *Ac 28:27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."* 28 *"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"*

From this point onwards the Word of the Kingdom will be sent to the Gentile nations alone through the ministry of the 144000 Jews during the second half of the Tribulation - *Mt 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

And will not return to Israel until they have cried out to the God of their fathers at the end of the Great Tribulation 3 ½ years later.

g). The whole nation of Israel, not just those in Jerusalem will have had 3 ½ years to hear the Word of the Lord through His prophets and although received by the 144000 His Word will have been rejected by the majority and no national repentance will have been forthcoming. The death of the witnesses pictures the death of the Word in the hearing of the Jews, leaving then devoid of the truth, just as we would see here from - *Am 8:9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon, And I will darken the earth in broad daylight; 10 I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, And its end like a bitter day. 11 ¶ "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.*

h). Now let's notice something else about the death of the 2 witnesses – their death is a precursor to that which is about to befall the nation as a whole. Just as God had allowed the Antichrist to kill the witnesses so He will now allow him to begin his genocidal actions against the Jewish people. But then in the resurrection of the witnesses at the end of 3 ½ days we would see the hope for Israel at the end of the next 3 ½ years when the nation will be brought from the place of death and the Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ along with Moses and Elijah, will return to be received firstly with repentance which will be followed by rejoicing and thanksgiving.

i). Just as Cain was marked - *Ge 4:15 And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.* So the 144000 are sealed on their foreheads – the first fruit of the repentant nation.

3). Now if we go back to the verses from Revelation Chapter 11 we might remember this from v7 *When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.*

a). 'The beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit' is of course the Antichrist, but the description that we see here may need some explanation, and in order to find that explanation we need to go to Revelation Chapter 13.

b). *Re 13:1 ¶ Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

c). We will no doubt remember from our last study the description we find here of the beast rising from the Gentile nations showing his inextricable connection to the 3 previous phases of the worldwide Babylonian kingdom through the imagery used to describe him.

d). And of course the 'power, throne and great authority' given to him by the 'dragon' as Satan is expelled from the heavens with his angels.

e). Now note what we see in v3 - *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed* – the Antichrist then will be killed and then raised from the dead by the power of the dragon.

f). Just as we see Christ's soul in Sheol following His crucifixion – *Ps 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

So we see the Antichrist, following his death, descending to the 'bottomless pit', the place where only the dead or angels would be confined – to be raised in a counterfeit of the resurrection of the Lord.

g). And it is as a result of this counterfeit that worship of the dragon and the beast ensues - *And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

4). We have seen previously the counterfeit of God the Father giving all He has to the Son through Satan giving his 'power, throne and great authority' to his son, and now we see the counterfeit of the resurrection of our Lord through the resurrection of the beast. The counterfeit does not end here though, but continues as we will see as we continue in - *Re 13:11 ¶ Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. 15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred and sixty-six.*

a). As we continue reading in Revelation Chapter 13 we see 'another beast' who comes up, not out of the sea, but 'out of the earth', who looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon – this would be the person described elsewhere

in Revelation as ‘the false prophet’ – *Re 19:20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*

And we see that he is the one who is the orchestrator of beast worship.

b). We also see that *He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men* - we might remember the events on Mt. Carmel in the days of Elijah the prophet - *1Ki 18:38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!"*

c). So, in the performance of these ‘great signs’ we have a counterfeit of the work of the Holy Spirit.

d). Just as during Christ’s earthly ministry, at His first advent, the Lord performed miraculous signs by the power of the Holy Spirit, Who through these signs drew attention to the Christ, so the miraculous signs performed by the ‘second beast’ will be done through the power of the first beast, the one to whom Satan will have given his power, in order to draw attention to the first beast through these signs.

e). But as we see from the verses from Revelation Chapter 13 - *he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived*

f). Deception is the key and we now see in operation a counterfeit of the Trinity with Satan, his son and supernatural power exercised by the false prophet.

g). And it is through these deceptive signs that ‘those who dwell on the earth’ are cajoled into making an image of the beast which is to be worshipped and to receive the ‘mark of the beast’, which is either his name or number, on their right hand or forehead – in a counterfeit of the sealing of the 144000. Just as the 144000 receive the name of their Father on their forehead so those who receive the mark of the beast receive their father’s name.

5). What we are seeing here with the image of the beast given breath to speak and to kill those who will not worship, in complete accord with that which we see in Isaiah Chapter 46, is one of the former things of old, declared from ancient times - in this instance through the prophet Daniel –

Da 3:1 ¶ *Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 "that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."*

*[the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.]*

a). Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold set up in the plain of Dura was to keep the kingdom's attention focused on the king and to enforce worship of Nebuchadnezzar, attributing to him the status of deity.

b). And within the type seen here there are a group of people who will not worship Nebuchadnezzar's image - Da 3:10 *"You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 "There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."*

c). This is a parallel to that seen in Esther - Es 3:2 *And all the king's servants who were within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.*

And will be fulfilled in Israel in that future day.

d). And according to the account in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego are cast into the midst of the fiery furnace for their refusal to bow

down to Nebuchadnezzar's image - Da 3:19 ¶ *Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.*

e). However, the 3 are not hurt by the fire as they have God's supernatural protection, just as Noah did in the days of the flood; protection formerly pictured through the account of the burning bush in Exodus – and although 2/3rds of the nation of Israel will be killed during the Tribulation, the nation as an entity will have God's supernatural protection – the very thing we would see in the 144000 being caught up to God and His throne and the Woman fleeing to the place prepared for her.

f). Following the events of the fiery furnace Nebuchadnezzar comes to the realization of what had occurred and who had protected the 3 Jews in the fiery furnace and issues a decree accordingly - Da 3:28 ¶ *Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29 "Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this." 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.*

g). And in the same way beyond the end of the Tribulation, following the deliverance of the Jewish people, the God of the Jews will be recognized and honored by the nations of the world - Eze 36:33 *"Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. 34 "The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35 "So they will say, 'This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the wasted,*

*desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.' 36 "Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it."*

*h). Eze 37:21 "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 "They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 24 "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 "Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. 26 "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 28 "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.'"*

6). We will have continue with this next time though, if the Lord is willing.