

# Insights In Prophecy

Unlock The Ancient Mysteries Of Daniel & Revelation

## BIBLE DISCOVERY SERIES

# 15

## LESSON

### Lesson 15

### THE CLOSING JUDGMENT: THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

Read Revelation 8

- Learn Why The Seventh Seal Represents The Closing Judgment In Heaven
- Discovery Why There's Conflict Over God's Appointed "Times & Seasons"

God's courtroom judgment is evident in the books of Daniel and Revelation. In Revelation 8 we find the seventh seal opened, which describes the final opportunity to trust in Yeshua and His saving grace. This just precedes the outpouring of God's wrath through the seven trumpet plagues. This seventh seal signals the closing judgment and end of probation (testing) for the entire civilization. Michael will stand for "the nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets [Moses and Elijah] and the saints," (Revelation 11:18). God's mercy will end, as illustrated in the Day of Atonement Festival (Leviticus 23:26-29), when those who persist with an unrepentant heart will be cut off from among the people.



Revelation 21:11 also points to the closing judgment in Heaven and Court's decree just before Messiah returns in His brilliance to light the world: "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to *everyone* according to what he has done." The focus of Lesson 15 and Revelation 8 takes us to that moment in time and this proclamation, which then leads to the release of God's wrath by the seven trumpeters.

As we have noted in the Insights in Prophecy Series, John wrote repeatedly about the events of the *sevens*. The *seventh seal* is opened to the *seven angels* who prepared to execute *seven trumpet* plagues; and, when the *Seventh Angel* sounds His trumpet Heaven declares the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our LORD and His Messiah Messenger, and He will reign.

In Lesson 12 we identified that Revelation 6:12-17 and the sixth seal opens at the visible and very dramatic Second Coming of the LORD with the armies of Heaven. We will also discover both the sixth trumpet (9:13-18) and sixth plague (16:12-16) also point to the stirring up of earth's military armies and the Armageddon confrontation at the visible return of Jesus. However, the seventh seal (8:1-6) and the seventh plague (16:17-21) are Sanctuary events, which release the Mighty Messenger to begin the Day of the LORD events at the seventh trumpet (10:1-7), all of which must occur before the Great Day of the LORD and the Armageddon confrontation—the Day when all enemies will be destroyed.

How do we know the events of the sevens precede the sixth seal, sixth trumpet and sixth plague? Both Father (He who sits upon the throne) and His Son will *leave* the throne room *together* and make their way to Planet Earth (Revelation 6:16; Luke 9:26) to finalize the plagues and to destroy all enemies of the Most High. Therefore, the seventh seal must be opened *prior to* the sixth seal, and the Seventh Angel must sound His trumpet and pour out His vial plague before the other six subordinate angels perform their duties. In the book of Revelation, the "sevens"—the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet and 7<sup>th</sup> vial—all highlight Messiah's position of highest authority; and, all three point to the Festival day of greatest importance—

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the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and not to a chronological count. In this case, the last (7<sup>th</sup>) trumpet and the last (7<sup>th</sup>) vial shall be first in this series of woes.

This challenges the commonly held view that the book of Revelation in it's entirety is a neatly arranged chronological presentation; in other words, the events of each chapter follow the one just before it. However, prophetic books are seldom neatly arranged in a sequential order. A review of the Hebrew Scriptures proves a theme is often repeated and scattered throughout the prophet's scroll using various symbols and idiomatic expressions.

So, it is with John's book of Revelation. Although the chapters lead us generally from beginning to end, within the prophecies there are "insertions" of passages that offer additional explanations; therefore, we often find overlapping events throughout the book. The student must look for commonalities between the various passages, much like a puzzle. For example, when an individual sees the *four worldwide portents*—"peals of thunder, rumblings [voices], flashes of lightning and an earthquake" we can be quite sure we have located a *specific point in time*; a *mile-marker*, we might say—the same *reference point*, like the matching pieces of a mysterious puzzle.

Therefore, the events of sevens—the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet and 7<sup>th</sup> vial—all point to the same moment in time and are associated with perfection and completeness. Pt. 18 on ***The Kingdom Calendar*** features the pinnacle, or turning point, of the great controversy between good and evil—the Yom Kippur Day of Atonement, also known as the Day of the LORD (or, simply the "Day"), when Messiah descends in the stormy darkness to begin His triumphant reign, and when the mysteries of God will begin to be finished.

### 1. The Lamb opens the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1. What happens in Heaven that is so unique? \_\_\_\_\_

*The seventh seal event is so solemn that countless millions of Heaven's inhabitants hush in reverential silence. Time is slipping away, and eternity is at hand. The Day of the LORD is about to begin. The few minutes that remain indicates time is running out for every man, woman and child on Planet Earth.*

#### Silence Precedes Judgment

We cannot overlook the Scriptural call for silence both in Heaven and on earth. All inhabitants of Heaven will halt in silence as an indicator that terrible events are about to erupt on Planet Earth, like the calm before a storm. Prophecy indicates that a day will come when the whole earth will be silenced just before the Day of the LORD begins, as the Judge makes the final decision between His wedding guests and those left in outer darkness (Matthew 8:11-12; 22:1-14; 25:30-34; note His wedding guests are gathered primarily from the "nations"—namely Gentiles). Zephaniah 1:7 says, "*Be silent* before the Sovereign LORD, for the *Day of the LORD is near*. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has consecrated [set aside; distinguished] those [guests] He has invited."

The obedient believers are called to silence. Psalms 46:10 says, "*Be still*, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Lamentations 3:26, 28 adds, "It is good to *wait quietly* for the salvation of the LORD... Let him *sit alone in silence*." David writes, "*Search your hearts and be silent*," Psalm 4:4.

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The whole world is called to reverence. "The LORD is in His holy Temple; let *all the earth be silent* before Him," Habakkuk 2:20. "*Be still* before the LORD, *all mankind*, because He has roused Himself [raised, or stood up] from His holy dwelling," Zechariah 2:13.

God will bring the whole world to an eerie silence by worldwide darkness: "In that day [of the LORD], declares the Sovereign LORD, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your religious feasts into mourning and all your singing into weeping," Amos 8:8-9. "I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you; I will bring darkness over the land, declares the Sovereign LORD," Ezekiel 32:7-8. "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill [as on the Feast of Trumpets]. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the Day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand—a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness," Joel 2:1-2. The Ten Days of Awe offer the last moments for repentant hearts as Yom Kippur nears.



How long does the darkness last? We don't know for sure but consider a similar plague at Israel's birth as a nation: "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt—darkness that can be felt... and total darkness covered all Egypt for *three days*. No one could see anyone else or leave his place for *three days*," Exodus 10:21-23.

Consider what is prophesied to happen after a three-day period in the future. "Come, let us [God's people] return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but He will heal us; He has injured us but He will bind up our wounds. After two days He will revive us ["bones came together, bone to bone... flesh appeared upon them... but there was no breath in them," Ezekiel 37:7-8]; and on the third day He will restore us ["and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army," Ezekiel 37:10], that we may live in His presence," Hosea 6:1-2. "The Sovereign LORD says, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel," Ezekiel 37:12.

Considering *The Kingdom Calendar*, the two witnesses will be killed just before God's mercy ends and heaven's lights are extinguished; then, "after the three and one-half days a breath of life from God entered them [in resurrection power], and they stood on their feet... then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up here. And they went up to heaven in a cloud [along with the raised tribulation saints], while their enemies looked on," Revelation 11:11-12.

"From Heaven you *pronounced judgment*, and the *land feared and was quiet*—when you, O God, rose up to judge [the wicked, and], to save all the afflicted of the land," Psalms 76:8-9. The prophet Isaiah adds, "Come near, you nations, and *listen; pay attention*, you peoples! Let the *earth hear*, and all that is in it, the world, and all that comes out of it! The *LORD is angry* with all nations; *His wrath is upon all* their armies. He will totally destroy them, He will give them over to slaughter... For the LORD has a *Day of Vengeance*, and a [*Eternal Jubilee*] Year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause," (34:1-2, 8).

### The Seven Angels With Trumpets

**2. In Revelation 8:2 John saw seven messengers "stand before God." What were they about to be handed?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Each angel received one of the seven trumpets of judgment, which indicates they were about to blow the instruments of God's wrath.*

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There are non-canonical Jewish writings that did not become part of the Hebrew Scriptures, but these scrolls were noted in the Bible around 40 times (to name a few, Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18; Numbers 21:14; 1 Kings 8:12–13; 1 Kings 14:19, 14:29; II Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22; and, 1 Samuel 10:25). There is a wealth of insight into Jewish thought and practices in these more obscure volumes. Two New Testament writers reference the *Book of Enoch* (Jude 4, 6, 13, 14–15; 2 Peter 2:4; 3:13). I Enoch 90:21 states there are "the seven... white ones." "The earliest reference to a system of seven... angels as a group appears to be in *Enoch I* (the Book of Enoch), which is not part of the Jewish Canon but is prevalent in the Judaic tradition, where they are named as Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Rague, Remiel and Saraqael," Wikipedia—Seven Archangels. The seven are also noted in Tobit 12:15, "I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in the glorious presence of the LORD, ready to serve Him."

In the promise to Zechariah that he would have a son named John, one of the seven angels declared in Luke 1:19, "I am Gabriel, I *stand in the presence of God*." Isaiah 63:9 reveals, "In all their distress He too was distressed, and the *Angel of His Presence* saved them. In His love and mercy, He *redeemed* them; He lifted them up and carried them all the days of old." The only Angel who can *redeem* and *carry Israel all the days of old* is Michael, our Messiah—the Seventh Angel who stands in the presence of His Father—Almighty God.

Of course, the seven angels are also found throughout the book of Revelation. Jews who read the book would quickly understand the seven Revelation angels to represent the Angels (Messengers) of the Presence of God. Therefore, Michael would be one of the seven messengers who are intimately involved in the appointed time of the end. He is identified as the "Man clothed in linen"—the garment of a priest—and, it is He who cries out to hold the worldwide strife until His 144,000 is sealed.

Please never imagine that this teacher believes Michael to be just another of God's created beings; He is the Word and was with the Father from the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it," John 1:1-5. The Angel of the LORD—Michael is another name for our Messiah; He is also called a *Lion* and a *Lamb* in the book of Revelation, but no one would suggest this implies He is a four-legged creature, or any less God. Yeshua is called inanimate objects—the Rock, Living Water, and Bread of Life; these describe but do not diminish the Creator of the Universe. These many names/titles in the Scriptures denote roles, which He has or will be fulfilling as He finalizes His plan of redemption.

This was a very common view until more recent times. Theologian and the Protestant reformation pastor **John Calvin** wrote, "As we stated yesterday, Michael may mean an angel; but I embrace the opinion of those who refer this to the person of Christ, because it suits the subject best to represent him as standing forward for the defense of his elect people." The great theologian, **John Wesley**, wrote in his commentary on Daniel 10:21, "Michael - Christ alone is the protector of his church, when all the princes of the earth desert or oppose it."

**3. Trumpets will be distributed to the seven angels. To what special event in Israel's Holy Days do we hear trumpet blasts associated with the sevens (Leviticus 25:8-13)?** \_\_\_\_\_

*Israel was to count off seven Sabbaths of years—seven times seven years, a total of forty-nine years. Then they were instructed to have the "trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land." Why? "Consecrate the fiftieth year and*

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*proclaim liberty throughout the land... it shall be a Jubilee for you... In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property."*

**4. What event in Israel's history corresponds, in part, to the seven messengers and seven trumpets that will sound (Joshua 5:13-15; 6:4)? \_\_\_\_\_**

*The "Commander of the LORD's army" promised Joshua that Jericho would fall. Michael instructed the prophet to have seven priests carry seven trumpets, and for seven days to march around the city with the Ark of the Covenant and blow the trumpets. On the seventh day the army circled the city seven times, and on the seventh turn they blew their trumpets and gave a loud shout; the city immediately fell in ruins.*

**5. God warned Israel if the people do not obey, there would be consequences (Leviticus 26:18-46). How does this possibly relate to the seven trumpet woes? \_\_\_\_\_**

*Israel will be punished seven times, if the people refuse to listen to God's warnings from His prophets.*

In Revelation 8:3 an angel steps up to the altar of incense in the Sanctuary having a golden censer, where he offers the prayers of the faithful as a sweet aroma before God. The incense represents many concerned prayers of the overcomers on earth during the appointed time of the end, asking for retribution for their sufferings.

The High Priest of Israel performed similar ceremonies on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) once a year. He was to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments along with a linen sash and turban. As part of the ritual, he would "take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and... incense and take them behind the curtain" and into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant resided (Leviticus 16:4; 16:12-13) and there make an atonement for the people.

**6. In Revelation 8:5 what does the angel do with the censer and fire? \_\_\_\_\_**

The filling of the censer with fire from the altar and hurling it to the earth would signify two important events: First, that God's mercy for mankind is now over. No further prayers of repentance will be entertained, because the cutting off time has arrived. Second, the believers' cries of retribution against their persecutors are being answered with fiery wrath direct from the Temple of God in Heaven (Revelation 6:9-10).

These requests of justice are reminiscent of Psalm 18 where David cried in his distress for God's response. The psalmist wrote Almighty will "come down" to bring judgment, in response to the prayers ascending to His throne: "In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears. The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because He was angry. Smoke rose from His nostrils; consuming fire came from His mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under His feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; He soared on the wings of the wind [four living creatures]. He made darkness His covering, His canopy around Him—the dark rain clouds of the sky. Out of the brightness of His presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot His arrows and scattered the enemies, great bolts of lightning and routed them. The valleys of the sea were exposed



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and the foundations of the earth laid bare at Your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of breath from Your nostrils," Psalm 18:6-15. Messiah's *Day of Visitation* is His personal response to the prayers of the righteous, which visitation occurs at the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

The prophet Ezekiel saw a similar vision concerning God's wrath against Israel for their practice of idolatry in the Jerusalem Temple (Ezekiel 9-10). The Shekinah glory left the Temple, which glory will return at the end of days to punish sinners and to clear out the Jerusalem Temple again. Ezekiel saw seven messengers: "six men" and "with them was a Man clothed in linen—a priest's robe—who had a writing kit at His side," (9:2). The seventh is no doubt Michael who is often described wearing Priest's clothing—the "man dressed in linen" (Daniel 10:5-6). Michael is admonished to "go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things [idolatrous worship] that are done in it," (9:4).

The "Man clothed in linen" was then to "go in among the wheels beneath the cherubim [four living creatures]. Fill your hands with burning coals... and scatter them [the fire of judgment] over the city" Jerusalem. So, He took "fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim, the Man went in and stood before a wheel. Then one of the cherubim reached out his hand to the fire that was among them. He took up some of it and put it into the hands of the Man in linen, who took it and went out" (10:2-7).



**7. With the throwing down of hailstone fire onto the earth in judgment, what four additional frightening portents jolt the planet (Revelation 8:5)? \_\_\_\_\_**

*Thunders, rumblings (voices-KJV), flashes of lightning and earthquake are added to the fiery hailstones. These four-spectacular portents are found also in Revelation 11:15, 18-19, and 16:17-21; and, they occur at the moment of the sevens (seventh trumpet; seventh bowl plague) in association with the Seventh Angel—Michael, when God's wrath is unleashed against the world; in other words, the beginning of the Day of the LORD.*

### The First Angel

**8. According to Revelation 8:6-7, the first trumpet of God's wrath brings what upon the earth? \_\_\_\_\_**

*Land masses are destroyed by hail and fire. In the trumpets, destruction is measured in the "third part," which is rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures.*

**9. To whom is the "thirds" associated (Ezekiel 5:2-5, 11-12; Revelation 16:18)? \_\_\_\_\_**

The trumpet plagues are specifically against unbelieving Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who have forsaken God to follow the Lawless One. Heaven cries out, "Come out of her [Babylon/Jerusalem] My people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to Heaven, and God has remembered her crimes... therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the LORD God who judges her," Revelation 18:4-8. As Jesus said, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will

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know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains... for it is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written," Luke 21:20-22.

**10. What city will be split into "three parts" during the plague of the Seventh Angel, and the global earthquake (Revelation 16:19)? \_\_\_\_\_**

*The "great city" is identified as "where also their LORD was crucified," Revelation 11:8—Jerusalem. Yeshua said to the rebellious Jewish leaders of His day, "I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate," Luke 13:33-35.*

### The Second Angel

**11. In Revelation 8:8-9 the second angel blows his trumpet. What falls from the sky into the sea? \_\_\_\_\_**

*The burning mountain, which may plummet into the Mediterranean Sea, will destroy ocean life, cause shipwrecks, tidal waves and great loss of property and lives. Earth's life-sustaining geological system will be thrown into chaos as the end-of-the-world woes continue to unfold.*

### The Third Angel

**12. The third angel sounds. The fresh water supply is contaminated by Wormwood. Jeremiah 9:11-16 describes this plague as against what city and its citizens? \_\_\_\_\_**

*Jeremiah prophesied, "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals; and I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there... it is because they have forsaken My Law, which I set before them; they have not obeyed Me or followed My Law... see, I will make this people [Israelites] eat bitter food and drink poisoned water [wormwood-KJV]... I will pursue them with the sword until I have destroyed them." The fact is that humans can only survive a few days without fresh water, and the drinking water will go sour first in Israel then across the globe during the last 40 days of human history.*

### The Fourth Angel

Revelation 8:12-13 describes the fourth angel's trumpet. The galactic lights will be altered, and the days and nights will grow shorter. At the voice of the LORD, the "earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again," Isaiah 24:19-20. Job adds, "He moves mountains... and overturns them in His anger. He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars," (9:5-7).

**13. During the Great Tribulation, what will God do in order to cut short the persecution of His elect—those He has sealed for protection (Matthew 24:21-22)? \_\_\_\_\_**

The forty (40) days of Jacob's trouble, as shown on *The Kingdom Calendar*, will be cut short when God shakes this planet out of its orbit. At Mount Sinai God's "voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens," Hebrews 12:26. The rotation of Planet

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Earth may well be sped up so that the days themselves are shorter, possibly by one-third of the day (Revelation 8:12). In this context, the day and hour of the Second Coming is beyond human knowledge. Matthew 24:36 proclaims, "no one knows about the day or hour, not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." That is why Messiah waits in readiness for the Father's order to reap the harvest at the end of time (Revelation 14:14-15); only the Father knows that moment.

### The Conflict Over God's Appointed "Times & Seasons"

In the book of Daniel, we discover two very interesting predictions about the final conflict of the ages. It involves God's "times and seasons," which are also called the "set times and the laws" of Almighty God. While Daniel prophesies our Creator can "change times and seasons" (Daniel 2:21), he also predicts the Man of Sin will, in contrast, attempt to "change the set times and the laws" (Daniel 7:25) of God. Therefore, prophecy is telling us to pay attention to these details, and to consider the opposing sides and what this means for the last-day overcomers. There are verses in the book of Daniel specifically connected to divine "secrets," which God promises to reveal to the wise and discerning at the appropriate time. Let's consider them now.

Concerning God, Daniel writes (2:20-22): "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His. *He changes times and seasons*; He deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. *He reveals deep and hidden things*" to the wise. We are reminded of a related promise in Daniel 12:9-12, where we are told the wise will understand two important timelines in the Hebrew prophecies when last-day events are about to begin: "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but *those who are wise will understand*. "From the time that the daily [worship at the Western Wall/Temple Mount]... is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up [on Temple Mount], there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days."

We want to learn about these details that have been hidden through the ages, which God promised He would reveal to the wise. It involves His prophetic timelines and His plans to change His "times and seasons". It also involves that evil actor who opposes truth and opposes God.

Regarding the evil Man of Lawlessness, Daniel writes (7:25): "He will speak against the Most High and oppress His holy people and *try to change the set times and the laws*. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time [3½ years; 1,260 days]." The New Living Translation says, "He will try to change their *sacred festivals and laws*"; and, the Wycliffe Bible says, "He shall think, that he can *change the times for the feasts*, and the laws."

Revelation 13:5-8 refers to the "Beast" and his evil practices, and the limited time he will rule over Planet Earth: "The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months [1,260 days]. It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander His name and His dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world."

So, by the fact that Daniel predicts it, God can and certainly will change the "times and seasons" by His mighty voice; no matter what season Jerusalem is in, whether it be spring, summer or winter, Messiah's



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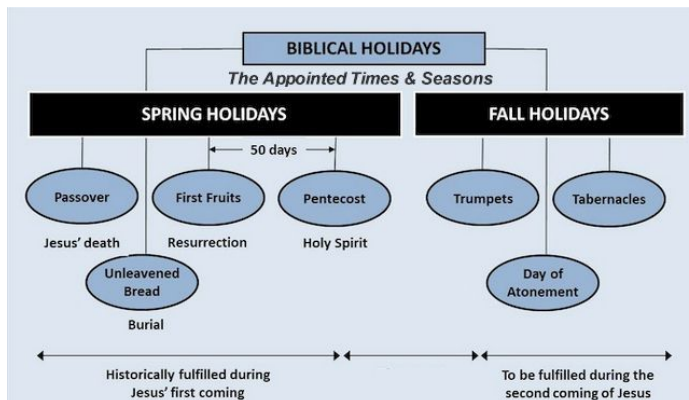
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voice will rock this planet into the fall season to fulfill His autumn Festivals at the assigned moment in time.

On the other hand, the Beast, the demon-possessed man, will persecute God's people, and will attempt (although unsuccessfully) to change what Scriptures call God's "set times and the laws." The fact is, although men have often tried down through the centuries to alter the Word of God to fit their own inventions, no man—not even the pope—can change the declarations of Almighty God, whether the Sabbath, the Festival periods, or any other law of God.

### The Festivals: Declaring The Past, Foretelling The Future

Long ago God established His seasonal Festivals, which He introduced to the Israelites in Leviticus 23. Passover (*Pesach*), the Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Hag HaMatzah*), the Feast of Firstfruits (*Bikkurim*) and the Festival of Weeks (*Shavuot*) represent the springtime Festivals, while the Feast of Trumpets (*Rosh Ha-Shanah*), the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) are celebrated in the autumn season. These sanctuary Feasts have celebrated Almighty God's leading of His people for many centuries, and also foretell events about the future. Many centuries after they were established, Yeshua fulfilled the spring Festivals at His death on the cross. Likewise, He is bound to fulfill the fall Festivals at His triumphant return. The autumn Festivals portray the unfolding of final events in Heaven and on earth and will be fulfilled by Messiah leading up to and during His Day of the LORD climax of human history. Therefore, the Biblical Holidays offer the wise and discerning students of God's Word divine dates of end-time disaster and deliverance—the deep and hidden things that are in process of being revealed.



The apostle Paul also connected the "times and seasons" to the Day of the LORD—the coming of Jesus our Messiah and the fiery demise of sinners, when he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6: "For you yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the LORD so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober."

Paul shares that although sinners will not understand or acknowledge the times and seasons, those who are awake need not be in darkness that the Day should overtake God's people as a thief. As sons of light, we are not left in darkness like the world. We are to be sober and wise, knowing the times.

This leads to the big question. Why will the Lawless One attempt to change God's *set times and the laws*? He may do so attempting to preempt Messiah's final redemption plan that is promised to be completed during the fall Festival season, or in order to set himself up in the Temple, on the Temple Mount, and then proclaim himself "GOD"... at the time of his choosing. Once the Papal leader sets up the abomination, Messiah's visitation will surely come. Shrouded in darkness, the whole planet will quake in

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His fury, and it will be shaken off its normal course so that even the "times and seasons" will be changed, which power Daniel wrote about long ago (2:20-22).

Paul continued to advise the watching believers on the disgraceful actions of Antichrist when he wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4: "Concerning the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the Day of the LORD has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that Day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the Man of Lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."

Daniel wrote about that event (9:27): "He [the Man of Sin] will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' [one literal seven-day week]. In the middle of the 'seven he [the Man of Sin] will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple [Mount in Jerusalem] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." Jesus also warned the last-day believers living in the land of Israel, "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again," Matthew 24:15-21.

The book of Revelation exposes Messiah's response to this act of defiance. It speaks of God's earth-moving event that changes the "times and seasons," when John wrote, "Out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'" Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. The great city [Jerusalem] split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found," (Revelation 16:17-20). How massive of an earthquake would cause islands to sink into the sea and mountains to collapse? The global quake Job wrote about long ago when God, "moves mountains... and overturns them in His anger. He shakes the earth from its place," (9:5-7) changing its orbit and position in the Milky Way Galaxy, and changing the times and seasons.

The primary period of the end-times during which the Papal leader is to reign, repeated seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation, is 1,260 days (Daniel 7:25; Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:2, Revelation 11:3, Revelation 12:6; Revelation 12:14; Revelation 13:5). At the end of his rule, God will unleash His wrath upon him and the disobedient crowds who followed him. Even though the punishments of the first four trumpeters of Revelation 8 are beyond the human mind to comprehend, the angel proclaims, "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels," Revelation 8:13. Lesson 16 directs us to Revelation 9 and introduces us to two more frightening trumpet plagues.

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