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The things which will announce, accompany and follow the return of Christ

No 4. "Events in Israel which will herald the return of Christ "

As we approach the end of this age and the Saviour's return to this world, the land of Israel will feature more and more in the front-page events of this world.

As the Wise Men from the East, as we commonly call them, were drawn by the Lord to Jerusalem at the time of the Saviour's birth (Matthew 2:1), even so the attention of believers will be drawn more and more toward that sacred land and city as the end of this age draws on.

It was in Israel that the Saviour was born and carried out His most marvellous ministry. It was there that He was rejected and crucified. It was there He died and was buried and rose again the third day. It was from there that He ascended up to His Father's right hand. It is to there that He will return to confront and defeat the would-be destroyer of His ancient people, Israel.

He will return to a land that will be making headline news and has every eye upon it. Christ's return will be in order to save His ancient people from imminent destruction at the hands of the forces of Antichrist, forces which will include elements from the English army for England, part of the ancient Roman Empire, will be part of the amalgam of nations which will support and accompany Antichrist in his march upon Jerusalem. But more about that later. "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more," Joel 3:1-2; 10-17.

Final Scenes

The final scenes of this age will be played out on the stage of Israel or, more precisely, in Jerusalem. "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it," Zechariah 12:1-3. "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of



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the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south," Zechariah 14:1-4.

Jacob

Jacob was very conscious of the prominent place and role of his descendants in the last days as he lay upon his deathbed, as Genesis 49 clearly shows us. "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father," verses 1 and 2.

It was also made clear to Daniel that his people, the Jews, would be at the centre of dreadful happenings in the last days. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," Daniel 12:1.

The time of these events is indicated in the response to a question asked by an angel of "the man clothed in linen", Who I believe was Christ, within Daniel's hearing. "And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished," Daniel 12:6-7. The phrase, "a time, times, and an half" is a very familiar one to the student of the prophetic scriptures. It is a reference to the last three and a half years of this age during which will take place those horrific events known as "the time of Jacob's trouble", Jeremiah 30:7.

These things are but further evidence of the centrality of Jerusalem and the land of Israel and the Jews in the run-up to the Saviour's return.

What signs should we be watching for in particular within Israel which will indicate the approach of the Saviour's second advent?

Here is the first event to look for.

I. THE REBUILDING OF THE JEWISH TEMPLE ON ITS ANCIENT SITE

Presently, the ancient Temple site is occupied by a Moslem mosque. Somehow, that will go and the new Jewish temple will be built. I have no knowledge how the site will be vacated in readiness for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple. At present such an event would be considered catastrophic and could only result in the most dreadful reprisals by the Moslem world.

Be that as it may, it will never the less happen!

1. Long ago, God indicated that He would gather His scattered people back to the land of Israel. Please carefully read these verses. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for



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your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD," Ezekiel 36:24-38.

Yet unfulfilled

The verses state that the Lord will gather His people back to their land in an unregenerate state - they will yet be in spiritual darkness and spiritual uncleanness.

That gathering has begun but they yet remain in spiritual darkness. In AD 70, after the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Romans, Israel was scattered and her nationhood destroyed.

But within living memory, the Word of God was fulfilled before the world on 14th May 1948 when Israel's nationhood was restored. A further advance in God's plan for Israel's reoccupation of her ancient homeland came in June 1967 when during the famous 6-day war, Jerusalem was reconquered and declared to be the capital of Israel.

While elements of Ezekiel's prophecy are being fulfilled we see that the greater part of his prophecy remains to be fulfilled. The regeneration of the people of Israel is promised, Ezekiel 36:25, as well as the land of Israel itself being restored to its former fruitfulness. "And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited," Ezekiel 36:34-35. Just as Israel has been literally restored to her land so she will be literally converted to faith in Christ and the land literally turned into a garden of Eden.

These two remaining aspects of Ezekiel's prophecy will take place at the time of and after Christ's return.

2. In recent times there has been a planning of the rebuilding of the temple. The internet abounds with articles on Jewish plans for the rebuilding of the Jewish temple. Some commentaries on the subject are far-fetched and nonsensical. However, that should not cause a dismissal of the fact that within the heart of Orthodox Jewry, there are plans being laid for a complete re-establishing of temple worship on the ancient temple mount. The mosque will go and the temple will be built!

3. The Biblical evidence of the rebuilt temple. We believe that the temple will be rebuilt, not because of the bold assertions of various Jewish and Christian organisations but because we find evidence of such a temple being rebuilt in God's Word.

A. It is clear that the Levitical law will be reinstated and in force in Jerusalem just prior to the Saviour's return. Consider what the Saviour has to say in Matthew 24:20: "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day". The Saviour is speaking of a great danger which will require all who profess faith in Him to flee from Jerusalem. They are to pray that the danger will not arise on the Sabbath Day for the Levitical Law would prohibit them from taking such a journey. Clearly, the Saviour is indicating that the Levitical Law will be in force in a fashion that is not presently the case in Jerusalem.



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Past or Future - Which?

There are some who dismiss the Saviour's words as having no bearing on future events. They claim that what He says relates to events in AD 70 and the Roman siege of Jerusalem.

But that is not so. The reason for fleeing is stated by Him. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," Matthew 24:21. This cannot be a reference to the terrible events of AD 70 for the simple reason that terrible as those events were, they were surpassed by the Holocaust suffered by the Jews under the Nazis. Josephus, the Jewish historian and witness to the Roman atrocities inflicted upon the Jews in Jerusalem states that just over 1,000,000 Jews perished during the siege of Jerusalem. Horrific as that figure might be, it pales before the 6,000,000 that perished under Hitler's regime.

The Saviour clearly states that the events of which He is foretelling will exceed anything that has ever been before or will ever be again. Here are His precise words. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," Matthew 24:21. He could not have been referring to the tragedy of AD 70 since that was exceeded by far by events in Germany in the 1940s. He must be speaking of something yet to take place and it will take place in Jerusalem in a day in which the Levitical Law will be in force, limiting the movement of citizens on the Sabbath Day - hence believers in Jerusalem are urged by Him to pray that the event which will herald the beginning of the "Great Tribulation" will not take place on a Jewish Sabbath.

I might add that the Saviour also said that "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," Matthew 24:29-30. As we have seen in Daniel 12:7, the tribulation period will last for three and half years. This is confirmed in Revelation 11:2. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Forty and two months" is three and a half years, the period during which Jerusalem will endure that future terrible subjugation by the Gentile forces of Antichrist. This tribulation, the Saviour says, is "immediately" followed by the visible return in glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are looking at future, not past events, in Matthew 24:21, at a time when the Jewish Law will once again be in force in Jerusalem.

B. Temple sacrifices restored. In Daniel's visions, there are a number of references to the Antichrist. In Daniel 8:9-11 we read of some of his actions. "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." He is mentioned again in chapter 9:27. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

A further mention of him is found in chapter 11:29-31. "At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away



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the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." In all these references, mention is made of putting forth his hand against "the daily sacrifice", "the sacrifice and the oblation" and "the daily sacrifice". I believe that there is little room for disputing the fact that these incidents refer to the same event that Paul refers to in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God," 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. This is the divine means of identifying the person of the Antichrist. It will be his causing the re-instated daily sacrifices to cease and his exalting of himself and his declaring of himself as God in the temple of God. For this to happen in fulfillment of prophecy, a temple must be rebuilt and the Levitical sacrifices re-instated.

There is no daily sacrifice today. There has been no sacrifice and no priesthood for nigh on 2000 years. This is that period mentioned in Hosea 3:4. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." The "many days" are drawing to an end and the time when the sacrifices will be restored draws on.

4. Antichrist will proclaim himself God in the temple. We have already noted 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and its reference to Antichrist opposing and exalting "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

All these things will happen in and around Jerusalem in their time and we will thereby know that the Lord's return is very near.

II. ISRAEL WILL MAKE A COVENANT WITH THE ANTICHRIST

Israel will receive him, welcome him and enter into an agreement with him. It was to this that the Saviour was referring when He said: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," John 5:43. The word "receive" means "to take with the hand, lay hold of any person or thing in order to use it." The Jewish people, like many other nations, particularly those within the territory occupied by the old Roman Empire, will receive Antichrist and embrace him as one who will do them good. That aspect of Antichrist was so vividly foreshadowed by the embracing of Hitler by the German people in the 1930s as someone who held out the hope of delivering them from the malaise that befell their nation following the First World War. They were blinded to the satanic under-currents of his character and regime and paid dearly for their blindness.

History will repeat itself in this matter. God in His mercy has given the nations of the world clear warnings of the consequences of forsaking His Word and embracing those who come offering an alternative "Redemption"!

1. Christ contrasted the reception He received from Israel with that which would be given to Antichrist. I have already referred to John 5:43. What the Lord has promised to do for Israel, Antichrist will also promise and will be received as Israel's deliverer and protector. Scripture provides us with a picture of this aspect of Antichrist's deception in the person of Absalom, the usurper of his father David's throne. "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel. And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.



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Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel," 2 Samuel 15:1-6.

Absalom promised a better regime than that which existed under David. David was God's appointed ruler over Israel. It was through him that God intended blessing and strengthening His people. "Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel," 1 Chronicles 17:7. What a picture of God's purpose in Christ for Israel. He is the One by Whom God will yet bestow His covenant blessings upon Israel.

God's Christ

Please read carefully these verses. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," Isaiah 11:1-12.

Sadly, the people who chose Barabbas and rejected Jesus, will make just such a mistake again at the close of this age.

2. This is the covenant with death spoken of by Isaiah, 28:15-18. "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it," Isaiah 28:15-18.

3. Jerusalem becomes the spiritual capital of Antichrist's kingdom. There he will worship until he takes away the worship of the Jews. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in



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the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate," Daniel 9:27.

III. JERUSALEM WILL SEE THE MINISTRY OF THE TWO WITNESSES DURING THE REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

Revelation chapter 11 clearly records what will take place within Jerusalem during the reign of Antichrist when God's two witnesses will bear their unparalleled and wonderful testimony for God, just before the return of the Saviour to destroy Antichrist.

Please read these verses carefully. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever," Revelation 11:1-15.

1. The location of their ministry. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified," Revelation 11:8. Here is a clear reference to Jerusalem. There can be no disputing where our Lord was crucified.

2. The length of their ministry. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth," Revelation 11:3. "A thousand two hundred and threescore days" or three and a half Jewish years, the length of the great tribulation.

3. The power of their ministry. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will," Revelation 11:5-6. Who are



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these two witnesses? That question has been asked many times and many answers have been given. I do not know their identity. I do see likenesses between them and two Old Testament men, Moses and Elijah. These two witnesses are straight out of the Old Testament! They bring judgment of fire down upon the enemies of God. They shut heaven. They turn water to blood. They smite with plagues. These were the miracles of Elijah and Moses, the two men seen on the mount with Christ. "And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him," Matthew 17:2-3.

Are the two witnesses Elijah and Moses? I do not know but there will be no mistaking them when they do come.

4. The conclusion of their ministry. It is by Antichrist that they are killed. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them," Revelation 11:7. The hatred of the people in Jerusalem toward them is clear. "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth," Revelation 11:9-10. How wicked are those who rejoice at the death of God's servants. It is the spirit that was to be seen at the martyrs' fires. It was seen at Calvary amongst those who mocked and sneered as the Saviour hung upon the cross. In the days of Antichrist's triumph it will be seen in abundance. But it is a triumph that is short-lived. The mockers were given a foretaste of the eternal wrath that was soon to follow in its eternal fulness. "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven," Revelation 11:13.

5. Their ascension up to heaven. "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them," Revelation 11:11-12. So ends the witness of all God's faithful ones though it is not witnessed by the earth as was theirs. Please note the phrase, "And when they shall have finished their testimony." Even in the midst of the power of Antichrist's reign God's purpose is sovereign and His will is wrought out despite the devil's efforts to the contrary.

Here then are some of the wonderful events in Jerusalem which will herald the near return of Christ. When these things are seen, the end is very near indeed — literally within days!

Unseen by men

While earth rejoiced over the death of the two witnesses, great things were about to take place unseen by the earth. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," Daniel 7:13-14. The scene is that of the heavenly investiture of the Lord Jesus into His kingdom just prior to His coming in power and great glory.

Dear friends, God is working out His eternal purpose unseen and unnoticed by men and unhindered by all the opposition of hell.

Christian, rejoice for all is well. God is on the throne and our Saviour will return at that time appointed in eternity past to gather His people to Himself for all eternity to come.