

## **What is the world heading for?**

‘New technology to cure cancer!’ ‘Peace in the Middle East!’ ‘New World Order to tackle poverty!’ ‘Food and oil running out!’ ‘Unstoppable global warming!’ ‘Third World War coming!’ ‘Economy about to collapse!’

Many people today are making predictions about what is going to happen in the next few years – politicians, journalists, scientists, as well as astrologers, psychics and teachers of various religions. Some are optimistic saying that the human race is clever enough to find solutions to the greatest problems and that no matter how bad things look we will overcome. More are pessimistic warning us of coming disaster and the end of the world.

Trying to tell the future is full of dangers. There are too many unknowns which often change conditions in ways nobody can foresee and mean that many people make predictions which are completely wide of the mark. In the 1960s some people in Europe and America said the Communists would take over the world. Then the Soviet Union collapsed and China became capitalist. In the 1970s the media were full of warnings of a coming ice age as temperatures were dropping. Now all we hear of is the threat of global warming. Not long ago there was a general optimism about the state of the world economy. Now people are despairing about it.

There is one source of information about the future, which is 100% reliable because it is inspired by God who knows the end from the beginning. He has communicated by the prophets of the Bible and finally through Jesus the Messiah. He gives us both bad news and good news about the days to come. He also tells us how to live in this world and be prepared for the next.

The bad news is that human beings are not going to sort out the mess we have made of the world. In fact the Bible says that this present age will end with a period of ‘great tribulation’ which the Lord Jesus said would be unlike any that has been ‘since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.’ This time will be so bad that if God did not cut it short all life on earth would come to an end. Matthew 24.21-22 (References to the Bible in this booklet contain first the name of the book – in this case Matthew, then the chapter – in this case 24. then the verse or verses – in this case 21-22). This period will end with the Day of Judgement.

The good news is that Jesus is coming back to save all those who put their trust in Him. The Apostle Paul describes it like this: ‘For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.’ 1 Thessalonians 4.16-17

### **So when will Jesus come back?**

Jesus told us: ‘But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only’ (Matthew 24.36). Paul compared the coming of the Lord to a thief in the night and a woman going into labour: ‘But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 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 labour pains upon a pregnant woman' (1 Thessalonians 5.1-3).

The thief in the night does not let us know exactly when he is coming, but we should always be prepared for the possibility that he might come. In human terms we do this by locking our front door and making sure there is no easy way for him to get into our property. In the same way we should always be ready for the coming of the Lord by accepting salvation through His death on the cross and His promise of eternal life.

On the other hand the woman does know when she goes into labour and once certain signs have begun the process will continue and get more intense until the birth of the child. So although we do not know the exact time of Jesus' return, there are a number of signs He has given us in the Bible of conditions on the earth at the time of His return. These signs are the birth pains which point us to this event.

What is remarkable about our time is that all the signs of the second coming are being fulfilled. There has never been a previous time in history when this has been the case. The clearest sign of this is the return of the Jewish people to Israel from the four corners of the earth and the conflict over Jerusalem, something which has only taken place in recent years. Many of these signs line up with the views of those who say that humanity is heading for a massive global crisis. This means that we are living in the last days of this age and the only hope for our world is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important that we can identify the signs of the last days, as they will become our road map pointing us in the direction of this glorious event.

We will look at some of the main signs in this booklet. Some of these signs are happening now. Some are taking shape and will reach their fulfilment in the coming great tribulation period (see the end of the booklet for more about this). All of them are a sign to us that we need to be ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus by committing our lives to Jesus as Saviour and Lord. At the end of this booklet you will see an outline of God's plan of salvation.

### **Sign 1. Increase in wars and conflict.**

Jesus said, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven." Luke 21.10-11.

In this passage Jesus is saying there will be an increase in conflicts within nations by people of different racial or religious background (the word used for nation is *ethnos* from which we have the word *ethnic*). There will also be world conflicts in the last days. 'Kingdom against kingdom' implies conflicts between nations, particularly blocs of nations in conflict (i.e. world wars). This will be the 'beginning of sorrows', which ties in with the idea of the woman in labour and the pains of the process leading to the second coming.

Since 1914 we have seen world wars taking place. In the First World War from 1914 to 1918 about 8-9 million died on the battlefield. The peace conditions imposed on Germany after this war created the conditions which brought Hitler to power in Germany in 1933 and so led to the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. This caused the greatest slaughter known to humanity, both on the battlefield and civilian deaths in Nazi concentration camps and air raids on cities.

Out of the Second World War came the Cold War which caused many conflicts around the world. The Cold War nearly became hot at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 when the world stood on the brink of a nuclear exchange between the USA and the Soviet Union which could have destroyed civilisation and possibly all life on earth.

In the 1980s Communism in Europe began to crumble and in 1991 the Soviet Union was dissolved. This signalled the end of the Cold War, but the next conflict was soon at hand. In 1991 the first Gulf War caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait brought the US led coalition into the Middle East.

Hostility to America in the Muslim world gave rise to al Qaeda and the 9/11 attack on New York. In response the American led coalition invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in the 'War on Terror.'

Wars are a colossal waste of lives, natural resources and money and inevitably bring with them poverty, disease, misery and untold suffering. What is interesting from the point of view of Bible prophecy is that all these events are interconnected and tie in with the prophecies about the 'distress of nations' and the labour pains of the last days. When a woman goes into labour she experiences a series of shocks or contractions which become more intense the nearer she gets to the climax which is the birth of the child.

In the last days scenario the world will experience the shocks of the global conflicts. In the book of Revelation we read of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: 'Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.' Revelation 6.4. This will result in famine and the death of a quarter of the world's population. Finally the armies of the world will gather for Armageddon, the last war of this age: 'For they are spirits of demons performing signs which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. ... And they gathered them together in the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.' Revelation 16.14-16.

## **Sign 2. Violence everywhere.**

In the last days of this age the earth will be full of violence and many people will be afraid of what is going to happen. Jesus said 'As it was in the days of Noah so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.' Luke 17.26-27. The Bible says that in the days of Noah 'the earth was corrupt before God and the earth was filled with violence.' Genesis 6.11. In particular there was something happening in the thought life of human beings causing them to act in wicked ways: 'Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Genesis 6.5. Jesus said that as we get near to the end of this age people would be fainting from terror at what is coming on the world.

Wherever you look in the world today this is happening. TV and films show images of violence and cruelty which people watch every day. Now we have computer games, which glorify aggression and killing. Add to this the influence of drink, drugs, the occult and rock music and you have a potent cocktail leading to violence and uncleanness in human behaviour. Newspapers are full of stories of violent and lawless behaviour in people's homes, in schools and on the streets of our towns and cities. Many people are afraid of going out of their homes after dark.

We see violence taking place in different parts of the world for various reasons. There are conflicts in places where people of different races, tribes or religions live close to each other. There are many governments which use violence to suppress any opposition to their corrupt rule. The drug trade has been another source of violence with gangs fighting over profits from selling drugs. Terrorism has affected many areas of the world as people are encouraged to use force to impose their ideas or religion on others. There are parts of the world where there is regular violence against women, sometimes in the name of religion and sometimes as a result of the sex trade. Even young children are being involved in violent gangs and armed conflicts.

The human race has come a long way from Cain who killed his brother Abel out of jealousy. With all the weapons of destruction available and the images of violence which flash through people's minds on TV screens there is no doubt that we are heading for the end of the age. The way of violence is literally a dead end for those who follow it.

By contrast Jesus taught us to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. He said, 'This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.' John 15.12.

In the book of Revelation we read that when the judgements of God strike the world, the majority of mankind will not 'repent of the works of their hands ... And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.' (Revelation 9.20-21). One reason for this is that today people are being conditioned by the media to accept such things as normal. If you took murder and violence, sorcery (the occult), sexual immorality and theft (crime) out of popular entertainment today there would not be much left.

The result of all this is the kind of behaviour that Paul warned would dominate the last days of this age: 'But know this that in the last days perilous times will come, for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.' 2 Timothy 3.1-5.

### **Sign 3. Sexual immorality.**

Along with great violence in the last days the Bible also teaches that there will be a breakdown of family life and sexual immorality. Jesus said it would be like the days of Lot (Luke 17.28-9). We read about Lot in Genesis 19 where we find him 'sitting in the gate of Sodom.' Sodom was a wicked city full of sexual immorality with a condition of aggressive homosexuality imposing itself on the rest of society. As a result 'Lot was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked.' 2 Peter 2.7.

Today we see a world wide rejection of the Bible's teaching that one man married to one woman is God's will for sexuality, family life and caring for children. All the evidence shows that children brought up in a stable family by their own father and mother have a much better chance in life than those brought up in alternative arrangements. Despite this governments, the education system and the entertainment industry constantly push the idea that there is no right and wrong when it comes to sex and you can live how you please.

As a result we have easy divorce, multiple sex partners, teenage pregnancies, single parent families and homosexual partnerships being recognised as marriages. There is a huge rise in abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. Child abuse and prostitution have become a global phenomenon with people travelling around the world to engage in sordid and degrading acts. Much of our popular entertainment is low-level pornography with hard-core porn easily available on the Internet and on cable TV.

We are told that modern attitudes to sex bring freedom and that God's laws are repressive. In fact the opposite is true. Free sex has caused people to be enslaved by destructive habits and desires. Women and children are abused. Because there is no real love and trust, fear and insecurity are the result for all concerned.

Actually God's commandments are for our good. I once stood on the banks of the River Ouse in the low lying area of East Anglia in England. At this point the level of the river is higher than the surrounding countryside. There are high banks or levees which keep the river within its boundaries and prevent it from flooding the surrounding countryside. The Lord showed me this as a picture of His commandments. If the river flows between the banks it is a force for good in the area. But if the banks are removed it becomes a force for destruction with a flood which will submerge the region and make it uninhabitable. The same applies to human sexuality. If it flows between the boundaries, which God has set, it is a gift of God which is for good. But if those boundaries are removed it becomes a flood of evil, which will destroy lives and ruin society.

According to the Bible the spirit of the age in the last days will be one of 'lawlessness' which will express itself in a rejection of God and His laws. The result will be a worldwide Sodom and Gomorrah which will bring God's judgement on the world. Today there is a way to escape this coming judgement – by repenting and believing that Jesus died as a sacrifice for our sins and rose again from the dead.

#### **Sign 4. Natural disasters and the environment.**

More than four times the number of natural disasters are occurring now than did two decades ago according to a report by Oxfam. The report speaks of more frequent, more unpredictable and more extreme weather events that are affecting more people. We are also being warned that climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and tornados.

The prophecies of the Bible indicate that disasters affecting the earth are going to increase in the last days of this age with the world being affected by earthquakes, famines and plagues. Jesus said concerning the days before his second coming, 'There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. ... And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken' (Luke 21.11, 25-6).

Statistics show a steady increase in earthquakes over the past 50 years, with many causing huge devastation and death. When these hit populated areas the loss of life is terrible. Many parts of the world are already facing famine and the likelihood is that this will increase as changes in the climate and wars destroy food supply. Unhealthy life styles, the ease of world

travel and human interference with nature are threatening the world with new and deadly viruses which could one day spread rapidly around the world and kill millions of people.

In Isaiah 24 there is an apocalyptic passage dealing with the destruction caused by catastrophic events in the last days of this age, as cities are left desolate and their inhabitants scattered: 'The earth is also defiled (polluted) under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left. ... The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up so that none may go in. There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.' (Isaiah 24.5-6, 10-11).

In the coming time of trouble there will be great heat, trees being burned up and waters undrinkable as well as violent storms and natural disasters bringing famine, disease and death. Revelation 8.7-11 describes this: 'And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up. ... Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven like a torch and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.' (Revelation 8.7-11). Revelation 16 speaks of a time when 'men are scorched with great heat', when the Euphrates River dries up and there is a 'great earthquake such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since there were men on the earth'. (Revelation 16.8,12,18)

Although the world has always had wars, starvation, epidemics, and earthquakes, the Bible tells us that these will increase in frequency and size as a sign of the last days.

### **Sign 5. The rebirth of Israel and the battle for Jerusalem.**

One of the most extraordinary events of modern times has been the rebirth of Israel. Out of the ashes of the Holocaust when it seemed all hope was gone for the Jewish people, the UN passed a resolution in 1947 which caused Israel to become a nation again after nearly 2000 years of the Jewish people being dispersed around the world. Despite the hostility of the surrounding countries Israel remains a nation today having survived many attempts to remove her from the map.

How can we explain Israel's remarkable rebirth in our time? The Bible teaches that God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the book of Genesis chapter 15 and 17. According to this covenant Abraham's descendants would be like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the heavens. He would also inherit the land of Canaan (Israel). Years later God promised Moses that if the people of Israel were faithful to Him and His commandments He would bless them in the land and make them a great nation, but if they were unfaithful and worshipped idols they would be scattered to the nations of the world (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28). He also promised that even if they were scattered to the farthest nation He would bring them back to this land (Deuteronomy 30). The events of the Old Testament show how this covenant worked out in the history of the Jewish people.

The Bible also prophesied the coming of the Messiah. Jesus came as the Messiah fulfilling a number of prophecies in the Old Testament. These were not just vague prophecies of a good man showing up and doing some nice things. They were very specific. Jesus succeeded 100%

in fulfilling the clear and specific prophecies of the Suffering Servant. He came by virgin birth (prophesied by Isaiah 7.14, fulfilled in Matthew 1.18-25) to be born in Bethlehem (prophesied by Micah 5.2, fulfilled in Matthew 2.1-12). He performed miracles (prophesied in Isaiah 61.1, fulfilled in Matthew 9.35) and taught in parables (prophesied in Psalm 78.2, fulfilled in Matthew 13.34). He was put to death by crucifixion (prophesied in Psalm 22.16 and Zechariah 12.10, fulfilled in Luke 23.33), buried in a rich man's tomb (prophesied in Isaiah 53.9 fulfilled in Matthew 27.57-60) and rose again from the dead (prophesied in Psalm 16.10-11, fulfilled in Luke 24.5-6). He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53.6, 1 Corinthians 15.3-5) and this message has been preached to people all over the world (Isaiah 45.22-23, Matthew 28.18-20). His sacrificial death for the sins of the world took place before the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD (Daniel 9.26, Luke 19.41-44). These are just some of the many prophecies of the Messiah which Jesus fulfilled with 100% accuracy at His first coming. We have confidence that He will fulfil the prophecies of the reigning Messianic King at His second coming.

Just before the crucifixion Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish people to the nations (Luke 19.41-44, 21.20-24). This prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70. He said this would happen 'because you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19.44), in other words because of the rejection of Him as Messiah by the religious leaders and the majority of the people. We need to remember also that many Jewish people also accepted Jesus as Messiah and the Gospel reached the Gentiles because of the witness of the Jewish disciples of Jesus.

It is clear that Jesus expected the Jewish people to remain an identifiable people during this age. He also said they would return to Jerusalem: 'Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.' (Luke 21.24) He said that the people living in Jerusalem at the end of this age would greet Him as the Messiah with the words 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord' (Matthew 23.39). This is the traditional Jewish greeting for the coming of the Messiah.

As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century there were students of the Bible who began to understand from reading the Hebrew prophets that there would be a return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. This greatly increased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They saw that Isaiah speaks of a return of the people from the four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11.11-12, 43.5-6). Ezekiel prophesies a time when the land would be desolate, but would become fertile again as the people of Israel return to it: 'But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield fruit to My people Israel for they are about to come.' Ezekiel 36.8. This passage also implies that the return in the last days will be in unbelief, but that God will bring the people to new spiritual birth: 'For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all countries and bring you into your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean. ... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.' Ezekiel 36.24-26.

According to Jeremiah chapter 30 the salvation of Israel and this spiritual rebirth will come about through a time of trouble unique in history, just as Jesus said would happen in the days before His return. Jeremiah says it will be like 'a woman in labour' (Jeremiah 30.6), which connects this to the end time period as we have already read in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. Only the intervention of God through the Messiah will save Israel from destruction.

The rebirth of Israel has coincided with dramatic changes in the Muslim world. The discovery of vast quantities of oil in the Persian Gulf region has brought enormous wealth into this area. 70% of the world's oil reserves are to be found in the Middle East, about 25% of them to be found in Saudi Arabia. Wealth from oil has transformed what was once a neglected part of the world into a region which now has great influence in the world. Some of the money from oil is being used to fund the spread of Islam and the building of mosques around the world. Today the economies of the whole world are dependent on the oil that comes from this region. If there were to be a sudden cutting off of the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf region the world economy in its present form would collapse in a matter of weeks.

This too ties in with the prophecies of the Bible. Islam can never accept the Jewish state of Israel in the Middle East. Because of the need for oil the rest of the world has become dependent on the Islamic countries of the Middle East so they will be willing to sacrifice Israel's security in order to keep in favour with the Arab oil producers. This ties in with a number of passages in the Bible which prophesy the hostility to Israel in the last days.

In Psalm 83 we read of countries which can be identified as neighbours of Israel today. These countries make a confederacy saying, 'Come let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more' - words that have been spoken by enemies of Israel in recent years. Ezekiel 38-39 describes an attack on Israel by an alliance of countries coming down from the north in the battle known in the Bible as 'Gog and Magog.' Included in this list of nations is Persia (Iran), a country which has made no secret of its desire to see the end of Israel.

Zechariah chapter 12 tells us that the focal point of this time of trouble will be the city of Jerusalem which will be a 'burdensome stone' for all the nations of the world. Today we see the great powers of our age, the USA, the EU, Russia and the United Nations, seeking a resolution of the Arab Israeli conflict which would involve dividing the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. The Book of Revelation chapter 16 prophesies the last war in history when the armies of the world gather at Armageddon, which means the hill of Megiddo, a place in the north of Israel. A number of passages in the Old Testament including Joel 3 and Zechariah 12-14 describe such a conflict taking place in the last days of this age.

Zechariah 12.10 has a remarkable prophecy which says: 'And I will pour on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and grieve for him as one grieves for a firstborn.' Here we have a prophecy of one who has been pierced (died by crucifixion) and who comes to save the remnant of Israel both physically and spiritually at the time of the last battle. This can only speak of Jesus the Messiah who came once to save us from our sins by his death on the cross and who is coming again with all power at His disposal to save Israel and the world from destruction.

The Messiah then comes and stands on the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem (Zechariah 14.4) and takes up His reign as 'King over all the earth' (Zechariah 14.9). At this time He will fulfil the prophetic hopes of the reigning King Messiah bringing peace to Israel and to the world.

## **Sign 6. Globalisation.**

Up until relatively recently in human history nations and continents were separated by vast distances which only a few intrepid explorers and merchants ever crossed. Most people never travelled far from the area they were born in. Today we can travel round the world in 24 hours and send messages instantly to the other side of the world. Migration has caused people of all races and cultures to mingle in ways which never happened in the past. There has been an explosion of technology, which has totally transformed every aspect of life.

The advances in science and technology have brought great benefits to many but also new problems. As international travel, commerce and modern means of communication have shrunk the world into a 'global village', the problems of humanity have also become international ones - drugs, terrorism, spread of weapons of mass destruction, economic crises, environmental pollution, new diseases, international crime, gulf between rich and poor nations, pornography and child abuse, refugees and asylum and so on.

In order to deal with such problems we see the growth of global institutions – the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Interpol, International bodies for refugees, human rights, the environment etc. We also see blocs of nations emerging, the most advanced of which is the European Union in which independent European countries have come together with a common currency. They are moving ever closer to becoming a country called Europe with its own president, foreign policy and legal system. We also have the United Nations, which brings all nations together in a world forum. Today that forum lacks the ability to impose its decisions on nations. However there are those in the UN who would like to change this and establish a world government. Today many world leaders are calling for a 'New World Order' to regulate the nations and deal with the financial crisis now affecting the world.

If a massive crisis were to hit the world (and the Bible says it will) it is not impossible to envisage the great powers sinking their differences and agreeing to some kind of world government to save the world from destruction.

The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation show that at the end of this age there will be a global form of government which will bring to power the final world ruler, known as the Antichrist or the Beast. Chapters 2 and 7 of Daniel are parallel passages in which God gives insight into four world empires, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome. The fourth empire (Rome) would exist in some form (the papacy) until the second coming of Christ and be revived in the last days of this age (the EU). Amazingly there is a statue of the woman riding the beast, an image used of the end time Antichrist system in Revelation 17, outside the European Council building in Brussels. The European Parliament building in Strasbourg is modelled on a painting of the Tower of Babel. According to Daniel 7.7-8 and 9.26 it is out of this empire that the Antichrist will come.

Revelation 17.12-14 speaks of 10 kings who 'are of one mind and they will give their power and authority to the beast.' Interestingly there are many globalist blueprints which divide the world up into 10 regions of the coming world government. It is likely that any such world government would be a fragile coalition which would break down as national self-interest rises up again. Again this is exactly what the Bible prophecies imply. In Daniel 2.42 we read of the 'feet of clay' which actually is a symbolic description of this 'kingdom' – 'And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.' As iron and clay do not hold together so this final world government will fragment in the last days. Daniel 7 tells us that three of the ten kings are put down by the beast, presumably because they are in conflict with him.

According to Revelation this world government of the beast will only last for a brief period of time but its effects will be terrible: 'He was given great authority for 42 months ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation.' (Revelation 13.5,7) He persecutes those who believe in Jesus and has an image made of himself which everyone is required to worship. (Revelation 13.7, 11-15). According to 2 Thessalonians 2 he will be energised by Satan with supernatural powers. He brings in an economic system whereby you cannot buy or sell unless you have a number with the 'mark of the beast – 666.' (Revelation 13.16-18). His rule will be shattered by the Second Coming of Jesus in power and glory at the end of this age (Revelation 19.11-21).

Today we see many signs of globalisation bringing the nations together. We also see nations surrendering their sovereignty to regional blocs of nations. According to Bible prophecies this process will bring together the final stage of human government which be the antichristian world government of the last days.

### **Sign 7. Increase in technology.**

Today's world is full of incredible inventions which our forefathers could not even imagine existing. Television can bring pictures into our homes of events taking place on the other side of the world at the moment they are happening. We can speak to people thousands of miles away instantly by telephone and send messages via the Internet. Computers have opened up whole new worlds of information, entertainment and communication. We can make journeys in a matter of hours by car, train or plane, which previously would have taken weeks or months. Our lives are made easier by 101 different labour saving devices around the home – the fridge, the washing machine, central heating etc (until they break down!). Technology has brought enormous advances in transport, medicine, agriculture, entertainment, crime prevention, warfare etc.

However technology also has its down side. For vast numbers of people technology is not available at all or only in very limited forms. This creates a great gulf between those who have it and those who do not. All technology requires energy. The main sources of energy used today are all finite. A recent UN report on the environment said the speed at which mankind has used up the Earth's resources has put 'humanity's very survival at risk.'

Many people are warning that we will soon reach a situation known as 'Peak Oil' when demand for oil outstrips supply and prices soar. Some people say we have already reached this stage. Without oil our marvellous machines will not run and without these machines many people today would be helpless. For generations human beings developed survival skills for growing and preserving food and other life essentials. With the growth of technology these have become lost as we rely on our labour saving gadgets.

The Bible has prophecies which indicate that the kind of technological society we know today will come into being. In the prophecies of Daniel written some 2500 years ago we find some amazing information relating this situation to the 'time of the end'. 'But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase.' Daniel 12.4. Go to an airport in a major world city and you will see people 'running to and fro' as they take journeys around the world. Switch on a computer and open up the Internet and you can tap into an almost infinite source of knowledge on

whatever you want to know. We are all witnesses of the fulfilment of these words of Daniel as we see a huge increase in travel and technology shrinking the world to a global village.

The increase in knowledge helps to explain prophecies which previous generations thought to be impossible to be fulfilled literally. In Revelation 11 we read about the death of the two witnesses in Jerusalem, an event which will be seen all over the world. In previous times it was asked, 'How could people all over the world see the same event at the same time?' For us the answer is simple – by television.

In Revelation 13 we are told about how the false prophet creates an image which people are told to worship. '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.' Revelation 13.15. In previous times the idea that an image could speak seemed impossible. In our time it is easy to see how an image could be given power to speak by new technology. In fact most people spend their time watching a speaking image on TV screens.

The next verse reads: '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, 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. 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 666.' Revelation 13.16-18.

When John wrote Revelation buying and selling was done by coins or barter and it was hard to imagine any kind of system whereby you could use a number or a mark on a person's body to do this. Today it is not so hard to imagine. In our society cash is being replaced by credit cards which have a number unique to the person they belong to. We are now seeing developments in the area of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags which make the rest of this prophecy a possibility too.

RFID transmits identifying information using radio signal waves by using a microchip assembly. A U.S. company, Applied Digital Solutions (ADS), has created a chip they refer to as an under the skin credit card. A chip as small as a grain of sand can be injected into the right arm between the elbow and the shoulder. ADS foresees a day when ATM cards and credit cards will be replaced by these new devices and is actively seeking partnerships with banking and credit companies to team up and develop commercial applications using the chip. No longer would a person need to swipe a card to buy or sell goods but would rather simply agree to the business deal and let the RFID technology complete the transaction.

We cannot say for certain that this is how the mark of the beast system of Revelation 13 will work, but it is remarkable that advanced technology is developing a means of buying and selling without cash through a number on a microchip inserted beneath the skin. It would also be possible to regulate who does and who does not get the number. Those who do not would be unable to buy or sell.

Revelation also describes the doom of this world system known as Babylon: 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons. ... The merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins and lest you receive of her plagues.' Revelation 18.2-4.

## **Sign 8. False Prophets and Messiahs.**

Jesus said, 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ (Messiah) and will deceive many. ... For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive if possible even the elect.' Matthew 24.4-5, 24.

Despite the fact that we live in an age that is on one level very secular and materialistic, there is a great search today for spiritual experience. There are hundreds of different cults like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and the Unification Church (Moonies), which claim to be spreading the truth but actually sow confusion. Islam is also on the march and gaining influence in countries which were previously nominally Christian. New Age gurus and psychics are in great demand and there is a fascination with witchcraft and magic. People are being told they can discover the 'god within' by doing meditation and yoga. In the western world more people believe the Hindu idea of re-incarnation than the Christian teaching of the resurrection of the dead. Some people are saying that Jesus may have been the Messiah for his time but we need a new Messiah for our time. Some are even claiming to be that Messiah.

The globalisation process also means that peoples of different races and religions now find themselves living alongside each other. Religion often causes tension and strife. With this in mind many are saying that the religions of the world need to work together and unite to save the world. In 2003 the UN convened an 'Alliance of Civilisations' aimed at bringing together politics and religion into a common cause for a new global civilisation. The United Religions Initiative Charter has called for a unification of religion in this cause.

There are many forces today promoting the idea that all religions are the same and should come together. Freemasonry teaches that all religions are the same. The New Age movement is looking to unite all humanity in a new spiritual consciousness. Much of the professing church is going down the same road with leaders calling for religions to come together to end wars and conflict.

Christians are being told they should not evangelise people of other faiths because all roads lead to God and He accepts all people whatever they believe. A new ecumenical and inter faith approach to religion now dominates the public life of countries which once professed allegiance to Christianity. In the past evangelical churches taught that Roman Catholicism is a false church which denies the teaching of the Gospel and has been responsible for persecution of true Christians and Jewish people. Now many are joining up with Rome in preaching a watered down message which is acceptable to all.

The prophecies of the Bible indicate that in the last days there will be a turning away from the truth and a denial of the true message of the Gospel by those who profess to be Christians. Today we see church leaders publicly denying the basic teaching of the New Testament, questioning the virgin birth of Jesus, His sinless life, His death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and His resurrection from the dead. Above all they question His promise to come again.

In Peter's second letter we read, 'But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them and bring on themselves swift destruction' (2 Peter 2.1).

The Book of Revelation shows that a false religious system will dominate the world in the last days. The churches will deny the blood of Jesus as the only means whereby sins are forgiven and be willing to make a compromise with other faiths in an interfaith union. This interfaith union will be known as Babylon, a false religious system, which will cooperate with the coming Antichrist during the first half of the tribulation. In Revelation 17 we read of a woman riding the beast which is a symbol of this alliance which will persecute true believers in Jesus.

The Bible teaches that God loves all people and wants them to be saved, but it denies that people can be saved any other way than through faith in Jesus. In Acts 4 Peter declared that faith in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the only means whereby God offers salvation to humanity: 'Nor is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' Acts 4.12. Jesus never said that all roads lead to God and that all people have salvation. He said 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' John 14.6. He says absolutely that He is the only one who can bring us to God as we repent of sin and believe that He died as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and rose again from the dead. No other person in history has done this or can do this for us.

### **Sign 9. The attack on the faith.**

According to the second letter of Peter, one of the features of the last days of this age will be a denial of the teaching of the Bible. Peter writes: 'Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For they wilfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished being flooded with water.' 2 Peter 3.3-6.

This passage tells us that in the last days people will scoff at the idea of the second coming of Jesus and also that the Flood really happened. They will believe evolution explains how we came to be here - that things have continued to exist for millions of years and that all life as we know it is the result of a continuous ongoing process over a vast length of time. The Bible teaches a 'catastrophic' view of the history of the earth - that the original 'very good' creation of Genesis 1 has been drastically changed by two events which took place over a short period of time. The first is the Fall of man described in Genesis 3 and the second is the Flood described in Genesis 6-9.

Today the media, the education system, the scientific establishment and sadly much of the church reject the Bible's teaching on Creation and accept evolution. If evolution is true then the Bible is not true and there is no meaning in the central teaching of the New Testament, that Christ died to save us from our sins and from death. Evolution assumes that there were millions of years of death and destruction before humans entered the world. However the Bible teaches that death is the result of Adam's sin. 'For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' 1 Corinthians 15.21-22. See also Romans 5.12-21.

Believing in evolution means you have to believe that in the beginning there was nothing, that nothing exploded, that the universe came out of that explosion, that life originated out of non

life and that incredibly complex life forms came into being as a result of random chance processes. Since none of those things can be observed as happening or ever having happened, belief in evolution is as much a matter of faith as believing what the Bible says: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' (Genesis 1.1). In fact there is far more evidence to believe that the ordered world we live in and the amazing design and complexity of all life forms is the result of God in creation than evolution. Further information available on this subject on request.

Evolution in its modern form originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century along with a number of ideas which attacked the beliefs of the Bible such as Marxism, various racist and fascist ideas, and Freudian psychology. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the attack on Christianity took shape in the Communist regimes of the Soviet bloc and China and in Nazi Germany. Although the Communists and the Nazis were opposed to each other, both had their roots in 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas opposed to Christianity, both caused rivers of blood to flow and both sought to eliminate Christianity. Persecution of Christians increased in various countries of the world with many martyrs for the faith. The Nazis also sought to eliminate the Jewish people and thereby prevent the prophecies of God for Israel from coming to pass.

One of the signs of the last days according to Jesus is such persecution. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake." Matthew 24.9.

Now that we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we see a world wide hostility to Christians who seek to spread the Gospel and bring others to know the Lord. The worst place in the world to be a Christian is the Communist regime of North Korea. China and Laos are also places where believing Christians face persecution. The second worst place to be a Christian is Saudi Arabia where fundamentalist Wahabbi Islam dominates society and oppresses believers. Under the kingdom's strict interpretation of Islamic law, conversion to another religion is punishable by death if the accused does not recant and go back to Islam. The third worst place is Iran. Although Christians are officially recognised as a religious minority, believers regularly face discrimination and persecution. The same pattern can be found to varying degrees throughout the Muslim world. If Christians accept their position and submit to Islamic domination they may have a measure of protection, but if they seek to spread the faith to Muslims they will face opposition or even death. Despite this many people from a Muslim background today are finding salvation through faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

But it is not just under Communism or Islam that the true message of the Gospel is opposed. All over the world there are reports of extreme opposition to the preaching of the Gospel often causing violence against believers. This may come from Hindus, Buddhists, members of Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and even Orthodox Jews. This opposition happens when people come to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord from these backgrounds.

In the western world there are constant attacks on Christianity through the media, the educational system and 'political correctness'. Permissive ideas on sex and morality have radically changed how people view marriage, how to bring up children, crime and punishment etc. Bible believing Christians are often portrayed as intolerant, bigoted and old fashioned. The idea that anything is 'right or wrong' is rejected as people are encouraged to do whatever they feel like doing. 'If it is right for you, it is right.'

In the name of freedom society has torn up God's commandments. Instead of finding freedom however we now have a growing social chaos in which people are enslaved to fears, disease and despair. As families fall apart young people are left without guidance or love and end up getting into drugs, alcoholism, violence and gangs. Older people are afraid to go out of their homes. Prisons are full and lives are ruined.

It is inevitable that this kind of society will lead to loss of freedom and dictatorship. If people will not be restrained by conscience and a fear of God and respect for His commandments, in the end they will find themselves living in a society where anarchy rules. If people have a choice between anarchy and dictatorship they generally prefer dictatorship even if it means losing some of their freedoms. The kind of technological developments we have seen as prophesied for the last days will give the state enormous powers to control behaviour and crack down on lawless behaviour.

The real answer to the moral and spiritual chaos of our time is to be found in the message of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. He offers us forgiveness and a new start. This message is considered 'politically incorrect' by many in control of our institutions today. It is said to be offensive to people of other faiths to say that Jesus is the one way to forgiveness and peace with God. In places where this message really needs to be heard, on the media, in the schools, universities, prisons etc there is a growing hostility to biblical Christianity and suppression of the Gospel. You do not have to look far to see that western society too is heading for a time of persecution of real Christianity.

Revelation 13 describes the antichrist who will rule the world briefly before Jesus returns to the earth: 'And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation. ... He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.' Revelation 13.5-10

### **Sign 10. The spread of the Gospel.**

Jesus' last words to His disciples before His ascension were, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Matthew 28.18-20. He said 'This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.' Matthew 24.14.

Despite the opposition to the Gospel the message is spreading around the world. While there may be spiritual decline in traditionally Christian parts of the world like Europe and North America, there are many coming to faith in Africa and South America. The persecuted Christians of the Soviet Union lived to see the end of Communism and new opportunities to spread the message in Russia. Despite continued opposition from the state, there are now millions of Christians in China, many meeting in unregistered house churches, but with a vision to spread the faith through central Asia.

Even in the Muslim world there are remarkable stories of people coming to faith in Jesus with many seeking to understand the truth and finding Jesus sometimes through dreams and visions and then reading the Gospel to understand His message. In Israel and the Jewish Diaspora many Jewish people are understanding that Jesus is the promised Messiah, who came the first time to suffer and die as a sacrifice for our sins and who is coming again in power and glory to judge the world in righteousness at the end of this age.

This is the one positive sign which God wants us to be involved in. The last days will be a difficult time to be alive, but they will also be a time when many will cry out to God for salvation. The world today is like a sinking ship which has so many holes in it that no one can save it. The only hope is to get on the lifeboat of salvation and trust in God to save us through the Messiah He has sent, Jesus Christ. The Bible says, 'Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Joel 2.32, Romans 10.13.

We need to make use of the opportunities of this time now to spread the message that Jesus has come once to save us from our sins and is coming again to judge the world in righteousness according to how we have responded to the message of the Gospel. Now is the day of salvation and now is the time that God want us to tell people how to be saved before the time of judgement comes on the earth. We should make use of the time that remains to us and get this message out to the people of the world.

### **The Great Tribulation, the Rapture of the Church and the Millennium.**

According to the prophetic scriptures these three major events will take place in the last days of this earth.

**The Rapture of the Church.** Jesus said there is a day coming when a large number of people will suddenly disappear. 'I tell you on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.' Luke 17.34-36. Jesus compares this event to the days of Noah, when the Flood came, and the days of Lot when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Both events happened suddenly when life was going on as normal. People were doing ordinary things like eating and drinking, buying and selling, building and planting, when the disaster struck. So it will be at this time.

In 1 Thessalonians 4.16-17 Paul describes it like this: 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.'

The people who will be caught up to meet the Lord are those of us who believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins and rose again from the dead. This event is known as the rapture of the church. The word 'rapture' is taken from the Latin form of the Greek word 'harpazo' used in 1 Thessalonians 4.17 for 'caught up'. To be a part of this event you must repent of your sin now and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. If you have never done this please read on to the last section of this booklet where you will find an explanation of how to be saved from the coming judgement of God.

We will then experience the most dramatic life-changing event of all time. We will receive new resurrection bodies which will never again experience sin, sickness and death (1 Corinthians 15.50-58). We will meet the Lord Jesus in the air and be forever in His presence. We will attend the wonderful event known as the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19.6-10) where the Lord and all those who have been saved through the ages will be present. For those who have this hope based on a living faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord there is a future which is so wonderful that no words can describe it: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' (1 Corinthians 2.9).

### **The Great Tribulation.**

There will be a seven year period known as the Great Tribulation during which the world will face a crisis of such enormous proportions that it will threaten to wipe out all life on earth. The world will come under the power of a world leader known as the beast or Antichrist. To begin with he will offer peace and safety to a world terrified by the events taking place. He will be controlled by Satan and will have an assistant known as the False Prophet who will cause people to worship him as a god.

Despite the evil of this time there will be a great number of people who will come to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. 144,000 Jewish people specially sealed by God will receive the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah and through their witness 'a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues' will be saved (Revelation 7). Many of these will be martyred for their faith. They will then be resurrected after Jesus returns to the earth at Armageddon.

In the first half of the tribulation period the Beast or the Antichrist will rise to power. He will be possessed and energised by the Devil. Half way through the seven year tribulation period he will experience a counterfeit death and resurrection which will cause people to worship him as god. The False Prophet will perform supernatural signs and set up an image of the beast which people will be told to worship. He will give those who worship the image of the beast a number which will enable them to buy and sell (666). Those who refuse to worship the image will not receive the number and so will not be able to buy and sell. You can read about this in Revelation chapter 13.

Setting up the image of the beast will cause God's judgements to fall on the earth. Terrible sores will afflict all those who receive the mark of the beast and they will be eternally damned. If you are reading this booklet during the tribulation period know that you must not take the mark. It is better to trust in Jesus and face martyrdom than take the mark of the beast and go to hell.

Finally Satan will gather the nations together to Armageddon, the battle which will take place in Israel and bring Jesus back to the earth (Revelation 16.12-19). Jesus will then return riding on a white horse as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will utterly defeat the armies of the beast and the false prophet who will then be thrown into hell. Satan will be bound in the abyss for 1000 years during which time he will be unable to deceive the nations (Revelation 20.1-3).

### **The Millennium.**

Then we will see the fulfilment of the words of Revelation 11.15: ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Messiah), and He shall reign for ever and ever!’ He will rule the world for 1000 years from a restored Jerusalem during a wonderful period known as the Millennium or Messianic Kingdom.

This age will be free from war and modern technology. People will live in agrarian communities knowing real peace and safety in the kingdom of God. This will be the fulfilment of the vision of the Hebrew prophets. ‘For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any more.’ Isaiah 2.3-4. ‘The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.’ Isaiah 11.9.

At the end of the Millennium Satan will be released for a short while. He will gather together those born during the Millennium who reject Jesus and resent having to live under His rule. Jesus will swiftly crush this last act of rebellion by Satan and cast him into hell. Then there will be the final Great White Throne judgement. ‘And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.’ Revelation 20.15.

This will be the end of the world. ‘Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.’ Revelation 21.1. All those who are saved will then live in the presence of God forever in the New Jerusalem: ‘Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away.’ Revelation 21.2-4.

### **When does the rapture happen?**

People who believe these scriptures have different views about whether the rapture of the church happens before, in the middle or at the end of the 7 year tribulation period. The pre-tribulation view is that the rapture must come before the tribulation because this is the time of God's judgement on unbelievers. Those who believe in Jesus will be delivered from this time. People who hold this view point out that the prophecies teach that this event is imminent and could happen at any time, which would not be the case if it happens at the end of the tribulation. The mid-tribulation view is that the rapture happens half way through the seven year period, after the Antichrist has risen to power but before the mark of the Beast system is put into place (i.e. 3 ½ years before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth). The post tribulation view is that the rapture happens at the same time as the second coming of Christ to the earth and that the church will be present for the events of the great tribulation as described in the book of Revelation.

I believe there is good reason to take the view that the rapture happens before the tribulation, however I also understand why people take opposing views. According to the pre-tribulation view, the second coming is indeed the 'blessed hope' of the church – when Jesus will come and take all those who believe in Him to Himself and be with us for ever more. But whatever view we take on this issue, it is important that we are ready to meet the Lord Jesus at any time by accepting Him now as Saviour and Lord. We should also be ready to suffer for Him if

called to do so, as millions of Christians are doing now in lands where there is persecution of the church. We may die before Jesus comes back anyway so we all need to be ready every day to meet the Lord should this day be our last.

### **Decision time.**

For those who have not yet received Jesus as Saviour and Lord now is the time to make that decision. If you do not accept this message there is only a terrible future before you as God sends His judgements to the earth and you die and face eternity separated from God in hell. The fact that the Bible tells us accurately about the events of the last days in its prophecies means that what it tells us about life after death is also true. Revelation 20.15 tells us 'Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.'

To be written in the Book of Life you must believe in Jesus as Saviour. In the book of Romans we read: 'If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ... For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Romans 10.9, 13.

The good news is that the Bible says we can know for sure that we are saved and have eternal life if we put our faith in Jesus Christ. Here is what we must do:

1. Understand that God loves us and wants to give us eternal life:

'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3.16. 'I (Jesus) have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.' John 10.10.

2. Realise that by nature we are all sinners and separated from God because of sin:

'For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.' Ecclesiastes 7.20. 'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' Romans 3.23. 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 6.23. In other words none of us is good enough to get to God by our own merits. We all fail Him in some way – in our thoughts, words or deeds or in things we fail to do.

3. Accept that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for sin:

'But God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.' Romans 5.8. 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.' 1 Corinthians 15.3-4. Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.' John 14.6. Jesus came from heaven as Son of God and lived a perfect life on earth as Son of Man. His death on the cross was the sacrifice for the sins of the world and the only way which God accepts to pay the price of our sin. He rose again and is alive forever to give eternal life to all who accept this.

4. Receive Jesus personally as Saviour and Lord.

'As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will

of man, but of God.’ John 1.12. We receive Christ by faith. ‘For by grace (God’s undeserved favour) you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.’ Ephesians 2.8-9. In other words it is faith in what God has done for us when Jesus died for us on the cross and not on what we can do for God that saves our souls.

When we receive Christ we are born again spiritually as Jesus said in John 3.5-7: ‘Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ All of us have ‘flesh’ / natural life as a result of being born as human beings. To have a relationship with God and enter heaven we must have spiritual life by receiving Christ as Saviour. A little child can do this and so can an old person about to die. But we have to do it as a personal act of repentance for our sins and faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Jesus says to us, ‘Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.’ Revelation 3.20.

If you have not yet done this and would like to here is a prayer you can pray to accept Jesus as your Saviour:

‘Dear Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ died in my place, shedding His blood to pay for my sins, and that He rose again from the dead to give me eternal life. I am willing right now to turn from my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you and ask you to help me become the kind of person you want me to be. Thank you Father for loving me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.’

Tell someone what you have done and start to read the Bible and have time every day to pray to God. Join with a fellowship of believing Christians and share your faith with others. If you need help with this please get in touch with us at the address below.