



# PREPARING TO STAND

EXTRA #5 — July 2008

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

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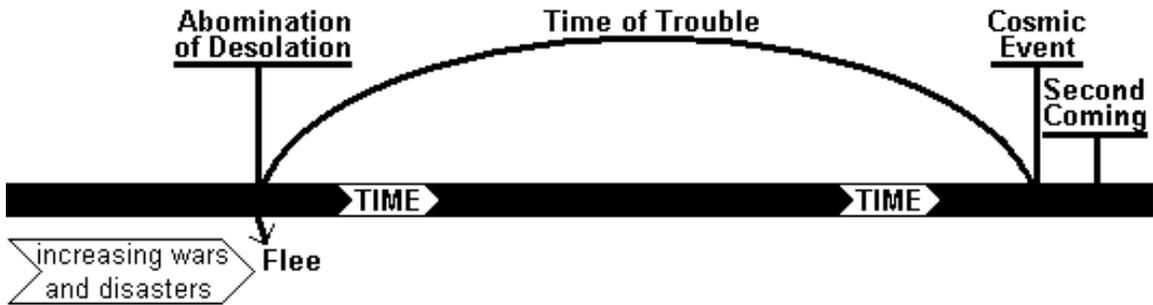
## Putting Together the End-Time Time-Line

by Jim Buller

“The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew gives an outline of what is to come upon the world.” (*This Day with God*, page 152 —Letter 90, 1902. See also *The Great Controversy* page 25.) This study will begin by making a time-line based on the Matthew 24 outline. Then, we will fill in this basic time-line with elements from other Scripture sources. To be able to fit the study in this format, many Scripture references have not been written out. Please look up all the references and read them in their context as much as has been left out simply due to a lack of space.

We will begin with a [painfully] quick look at Matthew 24. At the beginning of the chapter, the disciples, referring to the destruction of the temple, ask Jesus, “When will these things be?” They also ask, “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?” In answer to their questions, Jesus gives them a parallel prophecy which applies both to the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the end-times. Although we will refer to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, this study will focus on the end-time application of this prophecy.

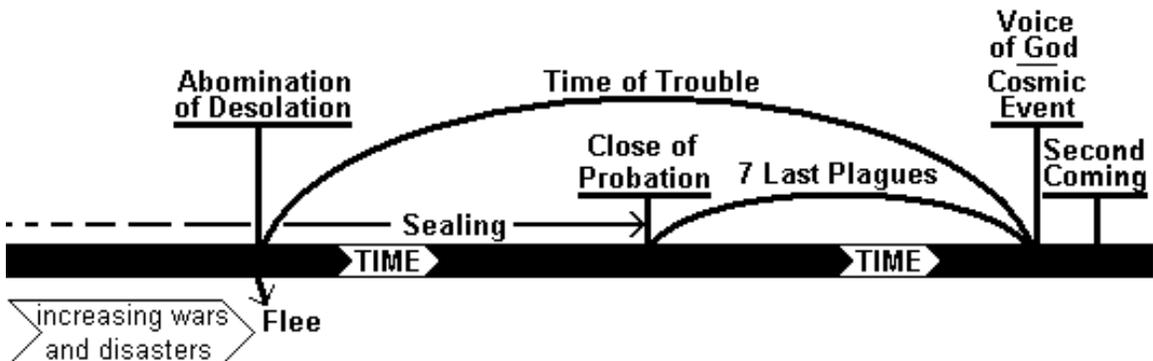
In verses 4-14, Jesus tells about things that will be happening as we get closer and closer to the end, notably increasing wars and disasters, and the gospel going to the whole world. Then, in verses 15-16, He gives the sign the disciples asked for. “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel —let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” The next four verses tell more about the flight, and then in verse 21 He tells the reason they need to flee. “For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now —and never to be equaled again.” The following verses tell about the deceptions during this time of “great distress” or “Time of Trouble” as it is typically called, based on the wording in the book Daniel. As the prophetic part of this chapter comes to a close, verse 29 describes the Cosmic Event that marks the end of the Time of Trouble, and verses 30-31 tell about Jesus’ Second Coming. This outline of events gives us the following basic time-line:



To fill in this time-line some more, let us look at the Cosmic Event just before the Second Coming. By comparing Matthew 24:29 with Luke 21:25-26, Joel 3:15-16 (and several similar Old Testament Scriptures), and Revelation 6:12-17, 11:15-19, and 16:17-21, we find that this cosmic event is also the Sixth Seal, the Seventh Trumpet, and the Seventh of the Seven Last Plagues. As the Seventh Plague is poured out, a loud voice comes from the temple in heaven —obviously God’s voice— saying, “It is done.” Thus the Cosmic Event is more commonly known as the “Voice of God.” It is also known as “the great day of God’s wrath,” and in this connection the question is asked, “who is able to stand?” Revelation 6:17, which ties in with the title of this paper.

Since this Cosmic Event is the Seventh Plague, the other plagues must happen just before this event. It will be a Time of Trouble indeed! But notice also what is said in *Early Writings* page 85. “The commencement [or beginning] of that time of trouble, here mentioned does not refer to the time when the plagues shall begin to be poured out, but to a short period just before they are poured out, while Christ is in the sanctuary.” So, we find that there are two parts to the Time of Trouble. The first part is this “short period” before the Plagues, with the second part being the time the Plagues themselves are poured out.

But, just before we put all this on the time-line, let us look at the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> chapters of Revelation, which deal with the plagues. Revelation 15:8 says, “The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.” Since the temple is where sins are forgiven, not being “able to enter the temple” means no more sins will be forgiven. So, our probation, or time of grace, closes *before* the plagues are poured out. We must be “sealed,” we must confess and be completely cleansed of all our selfishness and sin before probation closes. (See 1 John 1:9, Revelation 7:1-3). Adding all this to the time-line, we have the following:



Now, let us go back to the beginning of the time-line and study some more about the Abomination of Desolation. The verses in Matthew 24 mentioned earlier, tell us this is our sign to take action and flee, because the Time of Trouble is going to begin. This Abomination of Desolation, or Abomination that causes Desolation, (depending on which verse and which version you are reading), is a whole study in it self! For the time being, we will note that it is an indication, from God's perspective, that things have gotten so bad—the Abomination—that they have to be destroyed—the Desolation.

Comparing Matthew 24:15-16 with it's equivalent in Luke 21:20-21 which says, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies ... flee to the mountains." We find that at the time of the destruction of the temple, their signal event was Jerusalem being surrounded by armies.

Next, we need to put this information together with what is said in *Testimonies for the Church Volume Five* pages 464-465. "As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains." So, *our* signal event will be a *national* law passed in the U.S.A. [E.G.White was a U.S. citizen], enforcing Sunday as a day of rest. We need to be out of the cities by this "National Sunday Law" as it is typically called. A study of Revelation 13 shows that this National Sunday Law is the same issue as the Mark of the Beast—but unfortunately we don't have space for all that here.

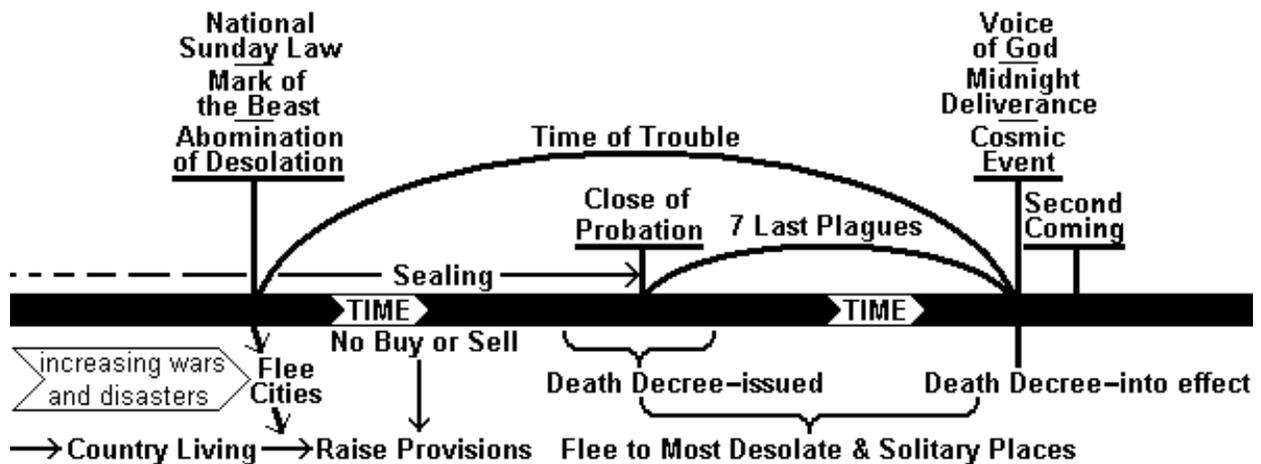
But we do need to look at a couple verses in Revelation 13. Verse 17 says that, "no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark." So, as a part of enforcing the National Sunday Law, those who don't comply will not be able to do any business. God has told us how to deal with this in *Country Living* pages 9-10, which says, "Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one." So, in preparation for the first part of the Time of Trouble we need to be living out of the cities where we are able to "raise [our] own provisions." Please notice the way this quotation is worded. "The Lord *has* instructed," so we should *already* be living out in the country, "for *in the future*" we will need to be able to live "off the grid" and raise our own provisions.

Revelation 13:15 also tells us the time will come when, "as many as would not worship the image of the beast [would] be killed." This is typically called the Death Decree. It happens about the time when the Plagues begin to be poured out. (Some who have studied the prophecies think it will happen just *before* the Plagues, others think it will happen shortly *after* the Plagues have begun.)

*Prophets and Kings* page 605 tells us, "The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews." Looking at the decree in the book of Esther, we note a couple of significant points. First, the decree did not go into effect the day it was issued. There was a date set in the future when the decree would go into effect. Second, it wasn't government agencies that went after the Jews. The decree stated that on the specified date it would *not be against the law* for anyone to kill them.

In *The Great Controversy* page 626 God tells us how to respond to the Death Decree. “As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places.”

The first half of chapter 40 of *The Great Controversy* deals with the date this Death Decree goes into effect. I strongly recommend that you read this chapter. On page 636 is the statement, “It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people.” The date this decree goes into effect turns out to be the same as the Cosmic Event mentioned in Matthew 24, that is already on our time line. So, in addition to this event being know as the Voice of God, it is also known as the “Midnight Deliverance.” Adding this last set of information to our time-line, we get:



One question that frequently comes up in connection with this study is, How long will the Time of Trouble last? We have already mentioned a couple things that give us some clues, so let us look at them again.

First, the *Country Living* pages 9-10 quotation talks about being in a place where we can *raise* our own provisions for when we are not able to buy or sell. Therefore, that time must last *at least one growing season*. But, if it only lasted for *one* growing season, simply stocking up supplies for a few months would be sufficient—but, we are counseled not to do that, (see *Early Writings* page 56). So, more than one growing season is probably more realistic. Which means the first part of the Time of Trouble will probably last about a couple years.

Second, remember the quotation from *Prophets and Kings* page 605 about the Death Decree being like what happened in the time of Esther? Esther 3:7 says they cast lots in the “first month,” when the decree was issued, to determine when the decree would go into effect. The lot fell on the “thirteenth day of the twelfth month!” (See also verse 13.) There was almost a year between the time the decree was issued and when it went into effect! So, if there is also a parallel with the *timing* of the decree, the second part of the Time of Trouble could last almost a year. (Note that in Esther’s time they were on a completely different calendar system, so these months do not correspond to our months at all.)

These clues point to the Time of Trouble lasting maybe two or three years. But, remember what Jesus said in Matthew 24:22. “And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.” We don’t know how much “those days” will be shortened though. Therefore it is still an indefinite length of time, and there is much we have to prepare for—to stand in the great day of God.

This brings us back to the Close of Probation, for we will not be able to stand in the day of God if we are not prepared for our probation to close. In Revelation 22:11, there is a declaration which is made at the Close of Probation. Notice the repeated use of the word “still” in this verse. “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.” *Who we are*—*habitually*—will determine which side of things we will be on at the Close of Probation. That is why it is so important for us to make a complete surrender to God *now*. We need to let go of anything that crowds God out of any part of our lives, and allow His Holy Spirit to *fill* us. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He works to give us a new heart and cleanse us of *all* our selfishness *now*. (See Ezekiel 36:25-27.) “Work out your own salvation ... for it is God who works in you ...” Philippians 2:12-13.

It is the Holy Spirit who seals us for the day of redemption. (See Ephesians 4:31.) The plate attached the forehead of the high priest tells us a lot about this sealing. In Exodus 28:36-38 it is described as being engraved “like the engraving on a signet,” or official seal, with the words, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” Since the root word for “holy” is the same as the root word for “wholly,” “Holiness to the Lord” literally means “completely God’s.” This is God’s goal for us, He wants to be able to mark us as *completely His*. (See Revelation 7:1-3 and 14:1.) But, He cannot do this while there is still any selfishness remaining in us. Brothers and Sisters, we don’t have much time to break our old selfish habits, and form new unselfish, loving habits. Don’t waste any time. Don’t be deceived, into putting this off, because by choosing to put off this work, you are choosing *not* to do it—and the habit of putting it off gets stronger.

In closing, remember the promise in 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.” Thank God we don’t have to do this work on our own! *He* has promised to make us holy, and preserve us blameless, so we will be ready when Jesus comes. We just need to cooperate with Him, and be willing to let go of anything in our lives that would keep Him from accomplishing His work in us.

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### Contact Information

If you are not receiving “Preparing to Stand” directly, and you would like to be on my emailing list; or if you want to be taken off my emailing list for any reason, please send me an email.

*“Preparing to Stand”*

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“God’s people ... [are] to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.” *Country Living* 30