

**WHERE ARE WE  
IN  
GOD'S CALENDAR?**

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**'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass' (Revelation 1:1).**

**'And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done ... I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches' (Revelation 22:6,16).**

Pinpointing just where we are in the unfolding of God's plan, is not merely difficult but, in a sense, it is dangerous in that it is all too easy to come to a wrong conclusion and from that, to enter upon a path that would lead one astray.

In the order of things, we may, however, discover where we are in the revealed purpose of God.

**1. As we begin our study, I wish to refer you to some verses which I feel are very relevant to our subject.** 'But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these' (Daniel 2:28).

'Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets' (Amos 3:7).

'Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you' (John 15:15).

When I read these passages I come to the conclusion that God is eager to share His purpose and plans with His people.

**2. To find out where we are in God's calendar requires us consulting the Word of God ALONE for it is there God has revealed His purpose amongst the nations.** As Daniel did, so may we. 'In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem' (Daniel 9:1-2).

ALL that the Lord would have us to know He has written in His Word.

**3. As with Simeon, Anna and a remnant in Judea at the first advent of Christ, we may be aware of the approaching fulfilment of prophecy.** 'And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout,

waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ' (Luke 2:25-26). 'And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem' (Luke 2:36-38). The word 'looked' carries the meaning of 'to expect the fulfilment of a promise.'

These were a remnant, known to Anna, who were moved by the Spirit of God to recognise that the time of the coming of the Messiah was drawing very near and doubtless consulted the writings of the prophets.

**4. Being commanded by Christ to 'watch' then it surely follows that there are recognisable signs which will tell us of the approach of the end.** 'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh' (Matthew 25:13). In Mark 13:28-37, we have the parable of the Fig Tree and the application by the Lord Jesus of the simple means that men have of telling the seasons of the year. So it is with the Word of God which, like the Fig Tree, will tell us 'the signs of the times'!

We have not been given the day and the hour when the Saviour will return; but we are told to watch for those signs which will herald His return. 'And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory' (Luke 21:25-27).

'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 the time draws near, we will be able to see by the signs that the return of Christ is fast approaching! Being commanded to 'watch' we must therefore be able to see and to observe the signs which tell of Christ's near return. This, of course, requires a knowledge of God's Word where the 'signs' are recorded.

The Book of the Revelation opens with these words and I repeat them for emphasis: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand' (Revelation 1:1-3).

The phrase, ‘which must shortly come to pass’ would be better translated, ‘which will come to pass in a short space of time.’ It is not that the events revealed were soon to take place back some 2000 years ago but that when these events started to unfold the time taken for them to take place would be short. Indeed, these events centre chiefly upon the seven years of the prominence of the ‘Man of Sin,’ ‘the Antichrist,’ and more particularly upon the final three and a half years of his reign.

We are told in Revelation 13, which gives us much information about the ‘Antichrist,’ that ‘there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months,’ (verse 5). Now from the day of his ‘revealing,’ there begins a countdown period of three and a half years, or a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or times, time and half a time, or forty and two months. These measurements all refer to the same period. Many will miss this sign, being utterly deceived by the allurements of the devil and the Antichrist and unheeding of the Word of God. But for the believer at that time there is given a very precise indication of just where they are in God’s calendar.

I believe that there is in the **Seals, Trumpets** and **Plagues** of the Book of the Revelation a repeating and reiterating of the information the Lord would have His people understand of the events that mark the end of this age. This is the method of any good teacher.

There is a strong emphasis on the events in and around Israel as we move through these Seals, Trumpets and Plagues. Just as this age began with ‘all that Jesus began both to do and teach’ in the Holy Land, so this age will end with events taking place there, just before the Saviour’s return to the very spot He left some 2000 years ago.

If you can grasp it, the **Seals and Trumpets** and **Plagues** cover the period from the beginning of the closing sequence of events revealed to us in the Book of the Revelation to the return of Christ. In other words, from the events revealed in chapter 5:1-5 until the return of Christ in chapter 19.

## **I. THE BOOK OF GOD’S PUPOSE FOR ISRAEL IS THE ‘SEALED’ BOOK HERE SPOKEN OF AND ITS UNSEALING MARKS THE BEGINNING OF GOD PUTTING INTO MOTION THE FINAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIS PLAN FOR ISRAEL**

The last question of the apostles before the Saviour ascended to Heaven was: ‘Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ (Acts 1:6). The pious Jew was most eagerly looking for a fulfilment of such prophecies as Jeremiah 23:5-6, ‘Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’ Sadly, there was little understanding of the coming of the Saviour to suffer and die before His coming glory and power. The prophets of old had sought to understand this truth. ‘Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of

Christ, and the glory that should follow' (1 Peter 1:10-11). However, many remained in ignorance regarding this two-fold coming of the Messiah. This is revealed to us in the words of the Saviour to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. 'Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? (Luke 24:25-26).

I believe that it was the book of the promises to Israel regarding its restoration that John saw in chapter 5. It was 'sealed' and when John thought that there was none could open it, bringing about the fulfilment of its promises, he wept. The word indicates a deep mourning and painful wailing. He is representative of the believing Jew throughout the ages, looking for the glorious promises of God in the prophecies of Israel's recovery and exaltation to come to pass. That none could be found worthy to open the book broke John's heart. However, he was comforted and cheered by the words of the elder in Heaven. 'And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof' (verse 5). The Lord Jesus is qualified, indeed, the ONLY ONE qualified to open the seals and begin the legal process whereby the terms of the Covenant made with Abraham and his descendants can be fulfilled and accomplished. By His blood-shedding at the cross, the Lord Jesus has purchased both for the elect of Israel and of the Gentile nations, 'all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ' (Ephesians 1:3).

These blessings include the promises made to Abraham in such verses as Genesis 15:18. 'In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates,' as well as the eternal blessing of ALL the elect set forth in such verses as Revelation 21:1-5. 'And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.'

The blood of Christ has purchased all of God's blessings promised to the nation of Israel and to all of the elect, both Jew and Greek.

The opening of the seals are, I believe, the first events that are preparatory to the return of Christ.

The opening of each seal is marked by specific evidences on the earth of God's revealing of His wrath toward, and judgment of, the Gentile nations. This opening of the seals is a 'precursor' to the Lord coming to claim the earth as His. I believe that these scenes are not successive but merely different aspects of God's judgment taking place at the same time.

## II. THE 'SEALS' ARE FOLLOWED BY 'TRUMPETS'

The 'trumpets' are the ancient instrument that signalled battle! Christ is come to 'war' against rebellious mankind. 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war' (19:11).

The final Trumpet brings us right up to the very doorstep of the new age as it were. '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 11:15).

There is a stirring in Heaven as Christ readies Himself to take to Himself His place as the King of the whole earth (verse 15). 'And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth' (verses 16-18). Note, '**Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead.**'

We can clearly read the 'hands of God's clock' in these words. It is the time of the first resurrection which takes place at the return of the Saviour.

## III. THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR THAT THE TRUMPETS ANNOUNCE IS SEEN IN THE SEVEN PLAGUES WHICH THE LORD POURS OUT UPON THE TEN KINGDOMS AND ANTICHRIST'S EMPIRE

'And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image' (16:2). Please note where and when the first plague falls. 'Upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.'

This tells us the time of the first plague. It was after the revealing of the Antichrist and his coming to dominating power and a tightening of his grip upon his subjects and the enforcing of the receiving of his mark and engaging in the worship of him.

We are well into the last three and a half years when the first plague is poured out. Remember the words of chapter 13:7-8. 'Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.' This enforcing of submission to the Antichrist was carried out by the 'False Prophet'. 'And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (13:16-17). It is during these activities that the first plague is poured out.

We have grounds for believing that the time of the pouring out of the 'vials' is a very short period. You will notice the rapid sequence of the plagues (16:1-21). Following

the pouring out of the seventh plague we are told a cry is heard: 'It is done.'

I think that we should notice that the **seventh** seal (8:1), the **seventh** trumpet (11:15), and the **seventh** plague (16:17) all take place at the closing of this age, on the very cusp of the return of Christ and the beginning of His Millennial reign.

Thus these three things, the seals, the trumpets and the plagues, reveal to us different aspects of the final fearful events that will happen at the end of this age.

I should say that the events should not produce 'fear' amongst the people of God but rather, as the Saviour instructs them, they are to 'look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke 21:28). The phrase 'look up, and lift up your heads' signifies 'to be elated, to shake off despondency and despair'! What will signal utter distress for ungodly men is the cause of joy for the redeemed. This is put so memorably in chapter 6:12-17. 'And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' That sight which will bring inestimable joy to God's people brings immeasurable misery and grief to the Christ-rejecting sinner!

'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God' (Hebrews 10:31).

If we visualise a train in motion on a downward slope with its speed ever increasing so that the distance markers at the side of the track pass ever more rapidly, so there is an increasing rapidity of events toward the end of this age. I believe that it is to this the Saviour refers in Matthew 24:22. 'And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.'

#### IV. LET ME NOW TURN TO THE QUESTION IN OUR SUBJECT IN A MORE DEFINITE MANNER

If I were to offer a suggestion, I would say that we should look at the opening of the first seal (6:1-2). There the return of Christ is revealed. That wonderful event is referred to repeatedly in this Book of the Revelation (1:7, 6:2, 6:12-17, 19:11). Preachers should take note of this!

**1. Here is a Scriptural Principle.** The end of all things is often shown before the terrible events which precede the Saviour's return. Isaiah 2:1-4 is an example of this. Following the wonderful verses of the impact upon the earth that the Saviour's return will bring, the prophet then moves to the judgments which will precede that return. See verses 10-22. This principle may be seen in many places in the Bible.

**2. The Lord would allay the fear of the saints by so doing.** The Lord likes to show how it will all end in order to comfort the saints. As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 4, after he has set forth details of the Saviour's return, 'Wherefore comfort one another with these words' (verse 18).

There is no place for despondency or despair for the one who reads and believes what the Bible says regarding the end of all things. What evil is wrought amongst God's people through ignorance of the Bible! How such ignorance delights the devil for, in the midst of the darkness it brings, he can sow his seed and raise a harvest of lies, folly and tears!

**3. There will be an awakening to a knowledge of this great truth of Christ's return at the end.** I believe that there will be a re-emerging of an awareness of the return of Christ as we near the end of this age. Christ is carrying a bow and that is a weapon used at a distance from the enemy. I suggest that this is an indication that the subject of the Saviour's return comes into sight some time before it actually happens. When He actually comes, He is carrying a sword, a close quarter weapon!

We are told by the Saviour that the 'Church' will have largely gone to sleep and will have 'forgotten' the return of Christ, right up until He is virtually on the doorstep. The Saviour makes that clear in the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). There we have the shameful statement, 'While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.' I cannot but say that such is the state of affairs today! Many times I have heard the lament from Christians: 'My minister never refers to this subject!' I believe that is true! When it is dealt with, it entails the setting forth of the barest of essentials. There is no detailed and close examination of the many, many prophecies relating to events before, concurrent with and after the return of Christ. Even in the midst of this pandemic there have been very few attempts to discover from God's Word the significance of this world-wide phenomenon with its physical, social and financial aggravations.

However, the Saviour plainly indicates that Heaven will not allow such a situation to continue! As the time draws near to the end there is an awakening cry from heaven, a fresh revealing of that glorious event, though it is still some way off. The saints of God are made aware of the nearness of the Bridegroom's return and they have revealed unto them that Christ is, as it were, on the horizon! There is a quickening of them and a growing awareness of His approach just as the parable of the Virgins teaches us. 'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him (verses 5-6). That cry has an immediate impact. 'Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.' There is a general arousing amongst the 'professing' Church. I would like to think that such an event is coming soon.

## **V. I THINK THAT TODAY WE ARE AT LEAST APPROACHING THE POINT REFERRED TO IN THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SEAL!**

I say that with hesitation and would not seek to impose upon any my view; but I ask you to consider what it is I have said. The **SEALS**, the **TRUMPETS** and the **PLAGUES** take place, I believe, during Antichrist's reign and mostly during the last three and half years of his reign, after he has declared himself 'God' and sits in the



temple in Jerusalem (2 Thessalonians 2:4). It is the emergence of Antichrist which will 'trigger' Heaven's response to earth's rebellion and wickedness.

But first, before the wrath and judgment, there is this highlighting of the truth that the return of Christ is drawing near!

### Creeping Awareness

Is there not a creeping, growing awareness of things prophetic amongst a remnant? Just over two years ago, the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony marked 100 years of its witness to the prophetic truth of God. The labours of the SGAT with its unchanging testimony to what God says in His Word and declaring that 'What He says, He means,' has been a beacon of light in this dark era. Its labours will yet bear fruit!

Is there not a growing consciousness amongst true believers of the deepening apostasy, the universal rejection of God's Word amongst those nations privileged for centuries to hear it proclaimed, and a recognising that, as never before, men are embracing everything that is unholy and ungodly?

There was a slow awakening to the wickedness of the World Council of Churches amongst evangelicals and likewise to the wicked departures of Billy Graham but light did finally dawn!

The darkness reigning over the nations is seen in that nothing seems to have been brought home to the multitude by this 'Coronavirus' plague.

Only a few have noted the 'spirit' of this day!

In the midst of the pandemic, the deaths and sicknesses, there has been little or no public reference to God. Political leaders have purposely avoided any mention of Him altogether while the so-called 'church leaders' in the mainline churches have made such scant and irrelevant mention of Him, silence on their part would have been more beneficial!

Pulpits in evangelical assemblies are also largely silent on the matter, many with contempt dismissing the Covid virus as a mere 'flu!

I believe that the events that are revealed by the opening of the first seal indicate the great need of this hour – a revealing of the approach of the Saviour's return.

It is something for which we ought to be praying! I will not be dogmatic about this but I think that what I say is worthy of some consideration. If I am correct in suggesting that we are near to the opening of the first seal and the revealing and emphasising afresh to God's people the great doctrine of the Saviour's return in glory, then soon there will follow the events shown us here under the likeness of the opening of the pages of a book. These are simultaneous occurrences in the 'earth,' the territory of Antichrist.

**The 2nd seal signals WAR** (verses 3-4). Who can read of the increasing 'squaring up' between the USA, Iran, China and Russia and the accumulation of advanced weapons

that almost daily we are told they are assembling and the ‘war games’ they engage in, without anticipating that it will all lead to conflict and likely that on a scale unseen before!

For many decades now the likes of the United Nations have declared that, ‘peace reigns’! Nothing could be further from the truth!

Even if that were true, the Lord Jesus tells us that the close of this age will see conflict between nations. ‘And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom’ (Matthew 24:6-7).

These things have marked this age even as have many sins but just as ALL sin will intensify as the age ends, so it will be with WAR!

The opening of the second seal will see the taking of ‘peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another’ (Revelation 6:4). Peace was given by God’s mercy for the sake of His people and the spread of the gospel. ‘I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Timothy 2:1-4). But that will end at the close of this age.

The rider of the horse ‘was given . . . a great sword.’ That seems to indicate an intensifying of God’s judgments against the nations.

**The 3rd seal signifies FAMINE** (verses 5-6). The prices quoted here are exorbitant according to the pricing of the day in which John lived. The use of ‘a pair of balances’ would suggest rationing, food being distributed by exact weight. That is the inevitable outcome of war! In recent days, due to ‘panic buying’ prior to a period of ‘lockdown’ many of the big stores ‘rationed’ certain goods for which there was a particularly heavy demand. We have seen this happen again following the announcement of the latest ‘lockdown’! It is, I believe, but an omen of things to come.

Our newspapers and news bulletins have recently predicted ‘food shortages’ as a result of BREXIT. That danger seems to have receded. But if there is war then food shortages will be very real and very severe. I believe that the change in farming methods, with the emphasis on profit, and a concentrating by farmers on crops which make the most profit, a range of foods may not be so freely available as once they were. Also, the supply of food is very much in the hands of the larger nations so that, like a child seeking a place in a queue may be pushed back by the stronger adults, even so there will be an intimidating of smaller nations in a time of crisis. That was evidenced very recently when the USA and other large countries bought up huge supplies of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and smaller countries had a difficult time obtaining a supply.

**The 4th seal initiates even more DEATH** (verses 7-8). War, famine and food shortage have ever created DEATH. On a much smaller scale, we have all seen the

chaos when food is supplied to starving communities – the fighting and scrambling for a loaf of bread as it is distributed. Multiply that a million times and we are at the 4th seal! Hell, that is ‘Hades’ or the grave, follows at the heels of death. ‘And power was given unto them (Death, and Hell) over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.’ This is over the fourth part of Antichrist’s dominion. Remember his territory will stretch from the Scottish border across Europe, along the north shores of Africa to the borders of India! That is a very large area indeed!

The reference to the wild beasts would suggest that the dominion given to man over beasts just after the creation, has been removed! ‘And God said ... replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth’ (Genesis 1:28). Many rambles, and indeed farmers, have learned to their cost the power of the domesticated milk cow!

**The opening of the 5th seal reveals a scene in HEAVEN** (verses 9-11). We are shown ‘under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held’ (verse 9). We may gauge just when this scene takes place by the use of the response to the cry of the martyred saints. ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled’ (verses 10-11). The phrase, ‘a little season’ means a ‘short, brief time’. So, we are told that the persecuting of the saints has yet to continue for a short time and then would come the avenging of the blood of those slain by Antichrist and his minions.

**The 6th seal reveals the SIGN indicating the return of Christ** and the soon end of the age (6:12-17). ‘The great day’ of ‘the wrath of the Lamb’ ‘is come.’ Matthew 24:29-30 states: ‘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.’

The cry in verses 16-17 is from the lips of the armies of the Antichrist, assembled to do battle with the Lord Jesus. We read of this attempt to war against the Saviour in 17:13-14. ‘These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.’

How wicked and foolishly-blind will men have become when they are ready to do battle with the Lord of glory! Is this not the darkness which prevailed at the cross amongst the Jewish leaders? Peter told Israel’s leaders that they had ‘killed the Prince

of life' (Acts 3:15). But overriding grace was at work at the cross and men were permitted to act so in order that the merciful purpose of God for His elect be carried out.

But this world will see a time when the Saviour turns on His attackers and they will pay the price for their folly! David spoke of that day. 'Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure' (Psalm 2:5).

**In Revelation 8:1, we read of the opening of the 7th seal.** It is followed by A **PERIOD OF SILENCE** – it is like the silence that goes before a great battle.

In the brief time that follows the opening of the 7th seal, there will be the **sounding of the seven trumpets** (chapter 8:2).

God is declaring WAR upon His enemies! What a foretaste of God's wrath upon sinful men will be seen, and it should be noted that the judgments now about to be visited upon Antichrist's kingdom come about in answer to the prayers of the saints, offered through the perfume of Christ's righteousness (verses 3-5).

It is during the time of the 7th Trumpet (11:15) that we read that: 'the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time' (12:12). This is another indication of where this is in God's timetable. It is during the great tribulation, shortly before the end, when the devil empowers Antichrist against the cause and people of God. Daniel was shown this time. 'I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom' (Daniel 7:21-22).

The devil knows how to read the 'signs of the times'! He knows that he has 'but a short time.'

**Back to the question** – there is a faint glimmer, a small but growing indication of an awakening today amongst us, God's people, and a realising that the coming of the Lord is indeed 'drawing nigh'!

Christian, you should seek to stir yourself in this matter and endeavour to become more acquainted with prophecy. We ought to pray also that a studying of God's Word amongst God's remnant becomes much more prevalent, especially amongst God's servants. There are very few it seems who care to find out more about the return of Christ. It is just like it was at the first advent. But small as it may be, I believe it is there and that signals a change of heart and mind amongst believers.

Are you amongst that number? I trust you are and that you will give yourself to the study of God's Word and be found waiting for the Lord to return.