

Prepare for Satan's attacks

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles pictures a thousand-year Millennium of peace, which will follow the return of Jesus Christ to this war-weary earth.

If the seven-day period of the Feast symbolizes one thousand years, then we can easily calculate that each day of the Feast represents 1,000 divided by 7; that is 142.85714 years. Now, isn't a calculator a wonderful thing?

The seventh day of the Feast of Tabernacles, then, pictures the last approximately 143 years of the Millennium. This final 143-year "day" of the Millennium has parallels with our day today. If we are carefully watching world events, we should be able to see that we must now be well into the very last years of *this* age.

In this article I would like to discuss some of the parallels that exist between the final years of the Millennium and the final years of this age – again, our age today – the six thousand year age of man.

(All scriptures are quoted from the New King James Version, except where noted otherwise.)

Relative levels of peace on earth

During the Millennium and specifically in its final years, there will be *real* peace on earth:

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken. I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods... Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make them afraid. (Ezekiel 34:24-25, 27-28)

After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely... You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'... Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day when My people Israel dwell safely, will you not know it? (Ezekiel 38:8, 11, 14)

During the latter days of *this* age – our age today – there will appear to be some semblance of peace. But it will be a deceptive peace. Like that in Europe in the days that preceded World War II, this "peace" will not be real peace. It will be one of Satan's counterfeits:

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 labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (I Thessalonians 5:1-3)

They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace!' when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11)

"Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar... that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,'" says the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 13:10, 16)

Satan soon to be loosed on the earth

Let us go back again to the last days of the Millennium. As soon as the final 143-year "day" of the Millennium is over, Satan will be released from his thousand-year imprisonment:

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison. (Revelation 20:7)

The parallel loosing of Satan on the earth at the end of our age today is detailed in Revelation 12:7-17. As God's children may shortly have to face the set of trials sparked by this event, I would like to devote a considerable amount of space to examine these verses. To obtain a clear picture of the relevant background, let us begin with verse 3:

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

This dragon is Satan the devil, a powerful angel who holds the same rank as Michael and Gabriel, and who rules over the various appearances of the Beast power. Notice that this dragon has access to heaven.

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. (Verse 4 – first part)

This, we believe, was Satan's first attempt at taking over God's throne. Satan had deceived one third of the stars of heaven – God's angels (Revelation 1:20) – to follow and support him in his rebellion. Satan was responsible for these angels being cast out of heaven and down to the earth.

And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. (Verse 4 – second part)

Who was this "woman"? Was she the Old Testament "church" of Israel (Acts 7:38 KJV)? Or was she Mary – Jesus' mother? Probably, she was both!

Satan prepared for Jesus Christ to be born so that he could try to destroy Him right at the beginning of His human sojourn. He actually made two attempts. His first attack on the human Christ was a physical one at the beginning of His human life through Herod's slaughter of the innocents (Matthew 2:16-18). His second was a spiritual attack at the time of the temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11).

She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. (Verse 5)

Through Mary of the house of Judah, the church of Israel brought forth a male child – the First of the firstborn children of God – the human Jesus Christ. Jesus was destined to rule the whole world with a rod of iron. Satan was – and still is – insanely jealous of this! After His human life, suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus returned to His Father's throne in heaven and was warmly welcomed there. Satan was – and still is – insanely jealous of this too!

God, for His own good purpose, coldly allows Satan's visits to heaven, but he is not welcome there as he once was. One day soon, Satan will be ejected from heaven permanently – never to return. We'll come back to this later, but for now, let us continue in verse 6:

Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Some time after Jesus had returned to His Father's throne, His people – now the New Testament church of God – fled into the wilderness. We have thought that this flight may have been from Judaea to Pella and beyond after the destruction of the temple in 70AD.

God had prepared a place of relative safety for them. They were to be fed in this place for 1,260 days. Using the year for a day principle frequently used in Bible prophecy, 70AD plus 1,260 years brings us to 1330AD. We have also understood this 1,260 days to be 1,260 years of the Middle Ages up to the beginning of the Renaissance period.

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought. (Verse 7)

There is quite a long interval between verses 6 and 7: perhaps 700 years. At the end of this age, Satan will lead his demons back up to heaven in another attempt at taking over God's throne. Michael – a great archangel and a powerful, angelic prince (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1) – may also be considered Christ's angelic general, who will lead God's holy and loyal angels in a tremendous battle against Satan and his demons.

As we have recently seen in the United States, Afghanistan and Iraq, human conflict is horrific enough. Can we even imagine the results of an angelic war? We believe that the first angelic battle resulted in God's beautiful creation becoming *tohu and bohu*: without form and void (Genesis 1:2). Will this happen again? Will the destruction only be stopped by Christ's intervention? Perhaps the incredibly devastating results of this conflict are part of the reason that Jesus warns:

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (Matthew 24:22)

Continuing in the first part of verse 8 of Revelation 12:

But they did not prevail.

The English word "prevail" is translated from the Greek word "ischuo" which means *to have or to exercise force, to be able, to avail, to be good, to possess might, or to be of strength*. But Satan will *not* prevail! He will be *un-able* – unable to maintain the force he initiates. His second attempt at invading God's throne will be ultimately useless. Of course, he is not and never will be good. He does not and will not possess the superior might or strength.

The English word "prevail" means *to be stronger, unbeaten, in control, and in the position of greater influence and power*. It means *to win through, to prove to be effective, to be the normal thing, to predominate, to remain in general use or effect*. But, again, Satan will *not* prevail! He and his demonic forces will not be the stronger. They will not be unbeaten nor will they be in control. They will not be in the position of greater influence or power. They will not win though, nor will they prove to be effective. They will not become the norm. They will not predominate. After Christ's return, they will cease to be in general use (not that they have been of any positive use since their rebellion, except as tools for the purpose of the great God). Although they cannot be put to death, they will be of no effect for all eternity.

**Nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.
(Verse 8 – second part)**

This verse and other scriptures indicate that, until the point in history referred to here, God has never formally or permanently refused Satan and his demons access to heaven. It is doubtful, however, that God would have allowed them into the holiest places in heaven. Perhaps He has allowed them into the heavenly equivalent of the Court of the Gentiles. Whatever may be the case, after this invasion attempt, God will close up the "visiting area" provided for Satan and his demons, thus making any subsequent visits to heaven impossible.

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Verse 9 – KJV)

The accent here is on the phrase "cast out." It is included three times, perhaps for emphasis and to grab our attention. The English phrase "cast out" is translated from the Greek word "ballo", which can mean *to throw out – as one would throw out dung!, to pour, to strike, and to thrust.*

**Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come."
(Verse 10 – first part)**

Perhaps this loud voice is similar to the joyous shout of Jesus Christ and the voice of the archangel mentioned in I Thessalonians 4:16. With this casting out of Satan and his followers, the time for great rejoicing will have come, and for good reason. Jesus Christ begins His return to earth and with Him He is bringing the Kingdom of our God. The time for salvation has come for His brothers and sisters, and hence to the rest of mankind. The time has come for the exercising of God's strength and of Christ's power. As we saw back in verse 8, Satan does not have the superior strength and power. God the Father and Jesus Christ do. This verse implies that the strength of God and the power of Jesus Christ will even be enhanced at the weakening and the casting down of Satan.

For the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Verse 10 – second part)

Until the time of this casting down, Satan will have spent much of his time visiting heaven, continually accusing God's children. The "bad news" in this verse is that some of Satan's accusations are to some degree valid. Let us remember this, and let us cease giving Satan bona fide reasons for his accusations. Let us admit our sins, confess them and repent of them before God. Satan must be continually frustrated when he sees one of us sinning, hurries himself to God's throne, and by the time he obtains an audience with the King of the universe to put in his accusation, the sin has been repented of, and God says to him, "Sorry, try again!" Nevertheless, as we all know, being sorry for our sins is only one part of repentance. Yes, we must continue to be sorry for them, but we must also strive to stop repeating them.

The single Greek word used for "cast down" in verse 10 is "kataballo." The word "ballo," as used in verse 9 above, puts the accent on thrusting Satan and his demons *out* of God's heavenly temple, whereas this word "kataballo" changes the emphasis to that of forcing them *down* to the earth. Perhaps there will be two actions: the first to get them permanently *out* of God's holy temple in heaven, and the second to force them *down* to earth!

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. (Verse 11 – first part)

The word "they" here refers to "our brethren" from verse 10. How do the accused brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ overcome the accuser and his accusations?

First, we overcome our accuser by the blood of the Lamb. This takes us, of course, right back to the symbolism of the Passover. No wonder Satan tried so hard to divert the human Jesus from His goal of redemption. Satan wanted to destroy all of Jesus' brothers and sisters, not just Jesus Himself.

Second, we overcome our accuser by the word of our testimony. Can it really be *our* testimony? Yes. It is the testimony that was given to us by Jesus Christ through His Word, through His prophets, His apostles, and through His ministers.

But what *is* our testimony? The word "testimony" is one of those words that has been frequently and wrongly misused as having some pseudo-sanctimonious meaning. Is our testimony merely a statement about the details of our conversion that we must recite in front of our church congregations, as some teach? No. The English word "testimony" comes from the Greek word "marturia" which simply means evidence given, record, report, or witness.

There is some truth to the widely known, rhetorical question, "If you were to be put on trial for the crime of Christianity, would your prosecutors have enough evidence to convict you?" Of course, we are not to vainly cast God's pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6), but we are to witness to our neighbours by humbly shining His light to them (Matthew 5:16).

The word "marturia" stems from another Greek word "martus" a noun meaning a witness or a martyr. This latter meaning fits right in with this final phrase of Revelation 12:11:

And they did not love their lives to the death. (Verse 11 – second part)

As shareholders of God's testimony and of the blood of our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, we do not love our lives unto death. We are to be actively giving our lives on a daily basis in the service of God and His children and, in the unpleasant event that it becomes necessary, we are to be willing – with all the strength and courage only God's Holy Spirit can give (Acts 7:54-60) – to suffer an early first death rather than to reject salvation and to deny the wonderful truth God has given us. God's children put a higher value on their spiritual lives than on their physical lives. We must be willing to give up the physical in order to obtain the spiritual. Continuing in verse 12:

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

This casting out and casting down of the accuser of God's children is a time of great rejoicing for the inhabitants of heaven – for God the Father, Jesus Christ, the angels and archangels, the twenty-four elders, and the four living creatures. Satan's visits have been a nagging pain to the heavenly host for so long. Now at last, those visits will be over!

Yes. This will be a time of rejoicing in heaven. But alas, heaven's gain is the earth's loss. This will be the beginning of a time of terrible woe for the inhabitants of the earth and the sea. The first stage of Satan's confinement will have begun. Like a caged, mad dog he will be filled with indescribable wrath because his sphere of operation will be restricted to the earth and because of his new awareness of the very short time he has left. We must avoid the idea that "woe," as described throughout God's Word, is merely a feeling of mild sadness or melancholy. A brief study on the word will reveal that when the prophets and the apostles write of "woe," they are writing about times of terrible, terrible destruction.

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. (Verse 13)

The insanely angry Satan, when he realizes what has happened to him, resolves to go right after the people of God's true church (and, conceivably, after the modern descendants of physical Israel too). It appears that Satan will by then realize that physical attacks on God's children are limited in their effectiveness and that he must attack them spiritually. Picture him as he is cast out of heaven and down to the earth, descending with great speed and screaming to his demon followers, "Let's make the most of our short time! Let's go get 'em!" But then, perhaps, slowing his descent and saying, "No! On second thoughts, let's use a more subtle approach (Genesis 3:1). If we hit 'em too hard and too fast, they'll put up their strongest defenses right away, and we'll get nowhere."

But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence (*KJV: face*) of the serpent. (Verse 14)

God will provide for His children. He will give them a way of escape. Although God nowhere promises that every single person who warms a seat in one of His congregations each Sabbath will simply waltz into this place of safety and although, for God's own good reasons and purposes, some of His people will not be permitted to enter this place, still His promises of protection for His children stand rock solid (Revelation 3:10, Psalm 50:15, Hebrews 13:5-6, Joshua 1:5-9,18). He will give them a place of safety and a means of getting there – the wings of a great eagle. The word "fly" – translated from the Greek word "petomai" – certainly does seem literal when we compare this verse with others containing this same word. Some late twentieth and early twenty-first century church members have speculated that God will provide huge jet airliners to transport His people to the place of safety. But we should remember that He bore His Old Testament church "on eagles' wings" to their place of safety from the Egyptians (Exodus 19:4), and as far as we know they walked all the way! With the help of God's miracles, it is true, but they walked just the same.

Where will the place of safety be? Bible students have asked this question from the very earliest years of the church. Will it be at Petra, as many adamantly insist? Will it be on Mount Zion or Mount Sinai? Or will it be some other location that will by then have been turned into a wilderness? Despite many speculations, we must honestly say that we do not know. But we *do* know that, even though the place of safety will be in a wilderness, it will be a place of nourishment from Satan's face and from his attacks on God's children. The majority of these attacks will probably be spiritual assaults. Think about it. This is Satan – not some human enemy – who is attacking the church. Without God's protective armour, even the mighty rock walls of Petra would be incapable of keeping out Satan's spirit, attitudes and temptations. Wherever the place of safety might be, God will provide the most nourishing spiritual food there for His children and, as we have already seen, God's children will overcome Satan and his attacks – not by a physical fortress – but by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by the armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18; I Thessalonians 5:8).

We believe that the "time, and times, and half a time," as mentioned in this verse, indicate that God's people will be in the place of safety for three and a half years during which, outside, the great tribulation will rage and the two witnesses will preach God's truth to the world (Revelation 11:3-12).

So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. (Verse 15)

As the church is flying to this place of safety in the wilderness, Satan gushes out a flood of water after her. But surely this does not refer to physical water! Satan knows that by merely killing God's people by drowning, he will only expedite their passage into the Kingdom of God. Notice that this water is spewed out of his *mouth*. We know that water is a symbol of spirit, so it is more likely that Satan's "water" will be a great flood of his counterfeit religious spirit – we might call it the "unholy spirit" – which he will spew out in an attempt to carry the Bride of Christ away and to divert her from her goal.

But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. (Verse 16)

How will the earth help the church? It appears that God will cause some kind of cavern to open up in order to keep Satan's flood from deluging His fleeing children. If the flood is a spiritual one, then we can be sure that this cavern will also be a spiritual one.

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Verse 17)

Satan will be livid with anger at his failure to destroy God's church. He will pour out his increased wrath upon the rest of the offspring of the woman (*KJV: remnant of her seed*); that is, of the church.

And who are the people who will make up this remnant? This is another question that God's people have probably been asking since the very earliest days after John put the words of this Revelation in writing. Certainly, as they are described as those who keep God's commandments and who possess Jesus Christ's testimony (see above comments on verse 11), the remnant will be made up of members of God's church,

The English word "rest" is translated from the Greek word *loipoy*, which means *remaining ones, others, remnant* and *residue*. The English word "offspring" is translated from the Greek word *sperma*, which means *something sown, seed (including male sperm), issue, or a remnant (figuratively, as if kept over for planting)*.

This last English translation of the word *sperma* is quite interesting. Substituting these translations back into verse 17, we might read that Satan "went to make war with the remnant of her remnant." Hopefully, this might mean that the remnant would be a very small one. But the idea of some seed being kept over for planting is also a very intriguing one. If the majority of God's harvest is gathered into His barns (Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17) for "consumption," then would He perhaps keep this remnant as mortal seed for replanting amongst their fellow human beings in the first years of the Millennium? Another thought, as this group is the remainder of the *offspring* of the woman (church), is that they might be literal children of church members – perhaps some of those who had been caught up in the apostasy (II Thessalonians 2:3) – but had repented and been converted at a later time. Before continuing, I should stress that the ideas in this paragraph are not part of the official doctrines of the church of God, but are just some interesting thoughts and speculations on the possible meaning of this verse.

It appears that, for God's divine purpose, those who constitute this remnant will not be granted entry into the place of safety and that they must continue – until the time of the first resurrection – to be exposed to Satan's final and most vicious attacks. As it also appears that God's two faithful witnesses will be counted among them (Revelation 11:3-12), we should not assume that the only ones not allowed into the place of safety are those with Laodicean attitudes.

Must heed warnings

Let us go back, just one more time, to the final years of the Millennium. We know that, after his release, Satan will have some success – a surprising amount of success – in tempting the remaining human beings of that time:

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison, and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9)

Hard to believe, isn't it? We may safely assume that God will expend an increasing amount of extra warning effort as the years of the Millennium go by, and especially as this final 143-year "day" progresses. So how could people who have enjoyed such wonderful peace and prosperity under the perfect rulership of Jesus Christ in the Millennium be so easily fooled when Satan is released? To some humans living at the end of the Millennium, Satan will be almost like an ancient myth. How soon we mortals do forget! But why should we be surprised at this? Although atrociously evil men like Hitler and Stalin lived less than sixty years ago, their names and their crimes have become mere myths to the young people of today, as the generations that lived during the middle years of the twentieth century – those with first hand experience of the evils of these men – grow old and die.

Most – if not all – humans alive in the final years of the Millennium will never have lived in a Satan-ruled world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:2) and, although they will have had many strong advance warnings, they will have had no direct experience with the devil's devious ways. As previously mentioned, perhaps many will be lulled by the peace that will have reigned on earth for a thousand years.

It is likely that Satan will use his thousand-year confinement to plan his final, last-ditch strategy. We can be sure that he, like Hitler after his imprisonment in 1923 and 1924, will then be at the most vicious and deceptive he has ever been.

But back, once again, to the last days of *this* age. Is Satan like a myth to any of us? We need to be constantly alert and wary that he is alive and well, that he is walking to and fro on the earth, pacing like a lion ready to pounce (Job 1:7; 2:2), and that he is trying and tempting God's people:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5:8)

As we have seen, when he has a success, he hurries up to God's throne to put in an accusation against us: "Did you see what Fred Bloggs just did?" ...even trying to coerce the great God into removing His protection from us so that he – Satan – can destroy us.

Keep in mind that Satan is a great and powerful angelic prince. He probably holds the same rank as the loyal archangels, Michael and Gabriel. For God's divine purpose, Satan has been temporarily allowed to remain the prince of this world and he already has the vast majority of its people firmly in his grip. His accent in the last days of this age will be on tempting God's people over to his side by the spewing out of the flood of his "unholy spirit."

As we look at world events today, most of God's people must be asking themselves, "Have the events of Revelation 12:9 taken place? Has Satan been cast down to the earth yet?" The recent inhumanly vicious terrorist attacks against the United States would suggest that he has. But we don't know. As we cannot be sure, what are we to do? We must keep zealously and carefully watching! Jesus Christ tells us so, over and over again:

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. (Matthew 24:42)

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. (Matthew 25:13)

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming – in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning – lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:33-37)

Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36)

Jesus repeats His warning through the apostle Paul:

Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. (Acts 20:31)

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2 KJV)

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (I Thessalonians 5:4-8)

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. (II Timothy 4:5 KJV)

He repeats His warning through the apostle Peter:

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. (I Peter 4:7 KJV)

He repeats His warning through the apostle John:

Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you. (Revelation 3:3)

As God and His family will increase their warnings to the people in the last years of the Millennium, God seems to be increasing His warnings to His begotten children right now as we get closer to the end of *this* age. God is preparing Christians for the Kingdom of God and, as part of this preparation, we must be getting ready for the casting down to earth of Satan and his demons.

Our Father and our Elder Brother love us and care for us. Through their ministers, they are shouting at us, warning us to wake up! We must heed their urgent warnings so that we can be sure that we will be counted worthy to be around to help those people resist Satan when he is released at the end of the Millennium.

We need to be zealously watching world news and conditions. But we must remember how devious Satan is. We should take care to look *behind* the major headlines. Since September 11, 2001, have we been putting all of our "watching time" into the news of the terrorist attacks and the coalition's retaliation against Afghanistan and Iraq? While it may be true that these are very significant end-time events, still, if our attention is on the headlines alone, Satan may take advantage of our tunnel-vision and cause other lower-key, but equally significant, fulfilments of end-time prophecy to slip by us unnoticed.

As those people on the last 143-year "day" of the Millennium will need to be preparing themselves for Satan's release, we in the last years of this age need to be preparing ourselves for his casting down and his end-time attacks.

Through the apostle Paul (I Corinthians 16:13), God gives us the final word and admonition on this. In this time of increasing physical and spiritual danger, it is our great God who is able to give us the courage that we need so very, very much:

**Watch,
Stand fast in the faith,
Be brave,
Be strong!**

John Plunkett

Building Bridges, The Church of God - Canada

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