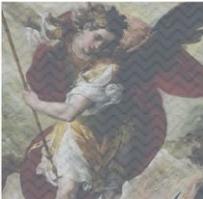


2022

# Christ's Second Coming

Comparing the Various Positions to Jesus' Words

Jesus answered the question about His Second Coming in great detail in what is known as the Olivet Discourse. It was a very comprehensive answer. I contend that this teaching of our Savior is the "decoder-ring" to all of eschatology. Herein, is a comparison of each of the prevalent positions regarding Jesus' Return to the Olivet Discourse – what Jesus said about His future return. (V1-8b)



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“The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, Even so, it is well with my soul.”

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Revelation 1:3 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.

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# I - Understanding What Jesus Said

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John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

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

Hebrews 10:25 ... exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Matthew 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The world has not seen the last of Jesus Christ! He was in the world once, but the world did not recognize Him, even though He had created it. He will come again, as He promised.

## When is Jesus coming back?

That is a question that has intrigued Believers since the days of the Disciples. In fact, the Disciples asked Jesus that very question, two days before His crucifixion. Their question was actually a multipart question: *when are You coming back and what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the world?*

Matthew 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. ... 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, **when shall these things be?** and **what shall be the *sign of thy coming***, and of the end of the world?

**Jesus answered this question** in great detail in what is known as the **Olivet Discourse**. It was a very comprehensive answer. I contend that this teaching is the

“*decoder-ring*” to all of eschatology. A layman who has mastered the Olivet Discourse can take a seminarian to the mat, so to speak, on this topic.

Oddly, **you would think that Jesus had not answered the question.** Men have been debating the sequence of events, especially the timing of the return of Jesus Christ, for centuries. Surprisingly, **all of the prevalent positions** on the Second Coming of Christ, and especially, the timing of the Rapture, **conflict greatly with each other and, far more importantly, with Jesus’ answer.** Yet, few seem to notice, or even care.

How can this be? Why do we not base our understanding on Jesus’ explanation? Could there be a better source than He? Yet, it would seem that most Christians have never read His answer. If they did, it was a cursory review without much deep thought.

Instead, they buy into “*every wind of doctrine.*” Many develop preconceived notions about the sequence of events and then attempt make scripture support their premise. This is called ***eisegesis*** - *the interpretation of a scripture by reading into it one's own ideas.* Far too many do not let the plain sense of scripture guide them to their conclusions.

“When the plain sense of scripture makes perfect sense, seek no other sense” – *Dr. Walter Martin*

Eisegesis has led to endless confusion. The various ‘*doctrines of men*’ greatly confuse the subject. They are **paradigms.** *Paradigm drives conclusion.* Our paradigms taint, shape, color and affect how we see scripture. As such, if we start with a doctrine of man, it affects our interpretation of God’s Word. We see scripture through the lens of our paradigm. In doing so, we often get it wrong.

This may sound a bit brash – to essentially declare the prevalent positions regarding Christ’s return, wrong. And, to be clear, I am! But, think of it this way, they are **each mutually exclusive** of one another. Thus, by definition, **they cannot all be right.** They could, in fact, all be wrong – but, they cannot all be correct. Therefore, at least all but one of these positions is untrue. (*I am excluding the newest, and least known, position referred to as Pre-Wrath Rapture. I believe it to be fundamentally correct.*) Therefore, if only one is accurate, which one?

Remember that these various positions on the return of Christ are all doctrine of men. No position is the inspired word of God. Each originator is fallible. No doubt, each of these men would say that they rightly divided God’s Word. Nevertheless, if at least all but one is wrong, it should not surprise you that they are, in fact, all incorrect.

As we look deeper into these positions, you will see that they are all based on eisegesis. These men did not let scripture guide them to their conclusions. In fact, they seem to be more interested in debating other doctrine of men, then getting it right according to Jesus’ word.

## Paradigms



Before we move on, allow me to pose a question. What do you hold as the standard of Truth? Most Christians, Bible-believing Christians that is, would proudly declare the Bible as their measure of Truth. Yet, in my experience, I have found that is not really true for most Believers. In fact, those who truly do may be few and far between.

Few are Berean in their walk with God – for *“they ... searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

Acts 17:11 ... they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

I find that few really test what they hear and what they believe to God's word. If a favorite pastor says it, they tend to simply believe it. They read a compelling book, only to drink in all the author says without question. Few *“prove all things.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

If you stand in the middle of a war, you will be shot by both sides. Generally, there are two camps – one on either side of the truth – that are warring against each other (See: *Ditches*). Anyone who dares teach the truth – a truth that nearly always lies between the two warring extremes – find that they are standing in the middle of an ongoing war. Neither side wants to hear the truth. It strikes me odd that there are so many followers of men amongst us.

1 Corinthians 1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas ...

As in Paul's day, these folks hold the word of man over that of God. The Reformed test all things to Calvin's writings. Arminians test all things to Jacobus Arminius words. Dispensationalists lean on dispensational doctrine. Those in covenant theology trust in covenant doctrine. And, on and on.

These are doctrines of men. Each is fallible. Granted, each would say they rightly interpreted God's word. But, did they? If so, how could there be so many mutually exclusive doctrines, where each believes they are right? They are all deceived – at least in part. It is ***not that they are all wrong; it is that that they simply are not all right.***

Yet, though they generally claim that they don't, their followers elevate man's opinion above the plain reading of scripture.

As a result, a lot of folks have so many differing **paradigms** all jumbled up in their minds that they cannot discern the Truth. In time they develop so many conflicting notions in their thinking that they can no longer see clearly. Truth becomes merely an aberration. Truth becomes whatever the latest '*man*' says it is.

They did not "*test all things*" along the way. Instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to lead them "*into all truth*," they rely on men to tell them what to believe. They are always seeking '*the man*;' then, when he fails them, '*the next man*.' It is a never ending quest for the '*perfect man*' – rather than the truth.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...

Many seem to actually prefer the *doctrine of men over the word of God*. They would rather ***believe what they want to believe, because they want to believe what they believe***, and *for no other reason*. This is no different regarding the various positions on the return of Jesus. Most have adopted one, and define end-time events accordingly. Others have various aspects of two or more jumbled up in their thinking.

We must recognize that all doctrine, books, sermons, teachings, and so on is words of men. As such, these words must be carefully tested to centerline of God's word. We must hold fast only to that which is true – regardless of who said it. No one is above God's word; no one is infallible. To do so, we must first major in, and master, the Word of God, while we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to *the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*. Only then are we ready to consider the words of men.

## Importance



There are those who fervently avoid this subject, believing it to be unimportant. Granted, some churches overemphasize various doctrines of Christ's Second Coming. But, for most churches it is rarely, if ever, discussed. Part of the reason is the disagreement that often ensues from teaching on this subject. The Church is divided along at least six different doctrinal beliefs. It is hard to gain consensus.

However, the notion of it being unimportant quickly disintegrates. You see 30% of our Bible addresses the Second Coming of Jesus, and the end-time events. Some say as high as 35%, others as low as 25%, so I split the difference. If nearly one third of

Scripture addresses this topic, it strikes me that it is important; God wanted us to be aware. It has been said; '*when God repeats something, pay special attention.*' How much more so should we pay attention, if He devotes 30% to Jesus' return? In fact, only 1/8<sup>th</sup> as much prophecy was recorded regarding Christ's first coming. There is seven times as much prophecy regarding His Second coming.

"God is eager to work more mightily now than He ever has through any soul. The clock of the centuries points to the eleventh hour." – *Streams, CHP*

Furthermore, when Jesus was asked the question of *when He would return and the sign of His coming*, it is noteworthy that He did not duck the question. We know from prophecy that His face was set "*like flint*" to the cross by this time.

Isaiah 50:7 For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore **have I set my face like a flint**, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

Luke 9:51 And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, **he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem**,

Jesus had '*bigger fish to fry*,' so to speak. He was only two days from the cross. If this had not been important, no doubt, He would have passed on the question, or told them it was not important. Instead, Jesus sat down on the Mount of Olives and in His longest recorded '*teaching*' explained what to look for in great detail.

It is interesting to note that He did not respond with any of the answers we often hear in church when this subject comes up: *it is too confusing, no one really knows, there are many differing positions, it's above your pay-grade, we have to agree to disagree, get you head out of your blessed assurance and focus on more important things like salvation, don't major on the minors, it is unimportant, or don't go there it causes dissention.*

No, He sat down and taught them in detail. If it were that important to Jesus, it should be important to us. **We are the first generation that is fully capable of being the last.**

## Very Important

This subject is important, as we can see from God's emphasis in Scripture and Jesus extensive teaching about His return. God takes it seriously; so should we. Furthermore, I do not take this subject lightly. In fact, I tremble at the prospect of misrepresenting God on this topic.

Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:** 19 And if

**any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

This passage makes it very clear how seriously God takes his description of end-time events. Those who add to, or take away from, stand in grave danger before God. There could be no greater consequence than to have one's name removed from the Lamb's Book of Life. Thus, I do not share this information lightly or as one who has only casually studied end-time theology.

## Day nor Hour



Usually, by this point, as I begin to describe what Jesus said to look for regarding His return, someone is ready to declare, “*no one knows the day or the hour.*” It is occasionally dripping with holier than thou self-righteousness. If I ever give you the day or the hour, just shoot me. If Jesus did not know the day or the hour, neither will any *man – or angel, or demon, or alien, or Mayan, or Nostradamus, or Martian, or book author, or pastor, or theologian.*

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

This statement is usually said to shut down the discussion by someone content to remain blissfully ignorant. It is meant to be a show stopper. But, it is not; in fact, it is the **show starter**.

What they fail to recognize is that it is a **perfect segway** to discussing the timing of Christ's return, and the timing of the rapture. You see, in context, Jesus is telling His disciples exactly what to look for. The immediately prior verses show the context:

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So **likewise** ye, **when ye shall see all these things, know that *it* is near**, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all **these things** be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

The “*it*,” in this passage is Christ's return that He had just described. So, while we will not know *the day or the hour*, we will know the season ... **if we are aware of what to**

**look for** – the “*these things*.” The “*wise*” will “*watch*” for Christ’s appearing, especially when the signs begin to take place.

Matthew 24:42 **Watch** therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore **be ye also ready**: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Matthew 25:4 But the **wise** took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Matthew 25:13 **Watch** therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

To “*watch*,” we must know what to watch for - the “*these things*.”

## Like a Thief in the Night



Coming on the heels of the “*no one knows the day or the hour*” objection, is that Jesus will come as a “*thief in the night*.” A thief comes at a time that no one expects him. Thus, they contend that Jesus will likewise come unexpectedly. The notion comes from Paul writing to the Thessalonians in this verse:

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord** so **cometh as a thief in the night**.

Sounds like an open and shut case. Jesus comes (The Day of the Lord) “*as a thief*.” But, as with the previous objection, context is king. It troubles me that so few quote the context. Rather, they prefer to cherry-pick verses like this **out of context as a proof-text for their pre-text**.

In this case, they are usually making the case of “*imminence*” as part of a Pre-Tribulational defense, and, also, that Christ’s coming will be without sign or warning – the implication being that it will sneak up on and surprise believers. However, the context kills the argument dead.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the **Lord** so **cometh as a thief in the night**. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction cometh upon them, as**

travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. 4 **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 **Ye are all the children of light,** and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but **let us watch** and be sober.

Can it be any clearer? This is a warning that Christ's return will be "as a *thief in the night*" **to those "in darkness."** Thus, "*sudden destruction cometh upon them,*" not upon us. We are "*the children of the light,*" and as such, are not appointed to God's wrath. Paul even makes that clearer a few verses later.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For **God hath not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

If it were not obvious enough, Verse 4 plainly says, "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*" So His Coming will **NOT be "as a thief" to the Christian** – one who is "wise," "ready" and know what "watch" for, that is.

Taking scripture willfully out of context leads to a host of misunderstanding and faulty conclusions about Jesus' return. I have to admit that it sometimes makes me want to scream. In context, this example, like the previous, is the *exact opposite of the case these folks are attempting to make.*

So, like the previous argument, this flimsy excuse actually makes the case that **Jesus will not come unexpectedly to Believers.** There will be clear prophetic events to watch for. Furthermore, it makes the case for knowing what to "watch" for ... the "*these things*" Jesus described in the Olivet Discourse.

Luke 12:56 ... how is it that ye do not discern this time?

**Note:** Jesus' teaching referred to as the **Olivet Discourse** is recorded in three Gospels: *Matthew 24-25; Mark 13, and Luke 21.* I refer to all three in the following discussion. Matthew is the most complete version; however, Mark and Luke offer important additional recorded insight and details.

## A Simple Question



After a rather confusing three days, leading up to Olivet Discourse, the Disciples ask Jesus a question that I would contend was above their pay-grade, at this point.

Matthew 24:3 ... Tell us, when shall these things be? and **what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**

No doubt, at times leading up to this, they must have thought they were taking over. But, Jesus keeps talking about dying, leaving and coming back. They did not understand, but were afraid to ask.

Mark 9:31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32 But they understood not that saying, and **were afraid to ask him.**

So, for them to ask him '*when are you coming back, and what will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age,*' had to be a Holy-Spirit-inspired question. Oddly, many in the Church act like Jesus did not answer the question. But, He did – in brilliant detail.

## 'These Things' – What to Look For



Jesus essentially said, '*when you see these things look up for your redemption draweth nigh.*' He is referring to His return and the rapture of the saints.

Luke 21:28 And **when these things begin to come to pass**, then look up, and lift up your heads; for **your redemption draweth nigh.**

I often ask folks to name one of the "**these things**." In over three decades of teaching this material, so far, no one has ever answered that simple question. It strikes me odd. It is all in the preceding verses. Jesus told us **exactly what to "watch" for**, and yet, virtually no one knows. It seems rather important to me.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, **when ye shall see all these things**, know that **it is near**, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all **these things** be fulfilled.

Furthermore, given the severity of "*these things*," doctor Luke records Jesus admonition to watch for and pray that we might be counted worthy to escape the "*these things*."

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and **pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape** all ***these things*** that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

These are '*signs of approximation.*' Peter admonished that we are to "*know these things*" to keep from being led away in error.

2 Peter 3:17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye **know *these things*** before, beware lest ye also, being *led away with the error* of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

This simple point of ignorance explains the acceptance of the various conflicting doctrines on the timing of Christ's second coming. They all seem reasonably correct to those who do not know what Jesus said to look for. When you do, they fall apart.

Furthermore, as we shall see, Jesus told us the exact sequence of events. Again, almost no one, it seems, knows what Jesus said. If they did, they would refuse the various doctrines of men. It is telling that none of them are in the sequence Jesus outlined. Furthermore, Jesus' sequence is corroborated throughout scripture to those paying attention to God's detail.

Thus, each of the popular positions on the timing of Christ's Second coming, fall apart in the Olivet Discourse alone. The key is to know the "*these things*," the key events. Fortunately, there is a "**decoder ring**" to understanding eschatology.

## Decoder Ring – Sequence of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week Events



In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus described the **first through the sixth Seals** of Revelation in the same numerical order found in Revelation. Interestingly, these Seals are found throughout the Old and New Testaments, in the same order – every time.

The first four Seals, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, are shown the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, in what Jesus calls, the "**Beginning of Sorrows.**"

Matthew 24:5 For many shall **come in my name, saying, I am Christ;** and shall deceive many (**Seal 1; White Horse**). 6 And ye shall hear of **wars** and rumours of wars (**Seal 2; Red Horse**): see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and

there shall be **famines**, (*Seal 3; Black Horse*) and **pestilences**, (*Seal 4; Pale Horse; death*) and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the **beginning of sorrows**.

It mirrors John's description in Revelation:

Revelation 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened **one of the seals**, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold **a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.** 3 And when he had opened the **second seal**, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat **thereon to take peace from the earth**, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he had opened the **third seal**, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a **pair of balances in his hand.** 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. 7 And when he had opened the **fourth seal**, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was **Death**, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, **to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.**

The first four Seals strike me as harder to discern at the time, than the next key events. For the antichrist will not be recognizable as such until the Abomination of desolation and war, famine and death are ongoing in the world. In fact, we have had war, famine and death going on for centuries, just as it is today.

However, these first four seals, in what Jesus calls the **Beginning of Sorrows**, will likely, I suspect, **amp-up dramatically** during this, the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel. Those paying attention, and having discernment, will likely suspect the 70<sup>th</sup> Week has opened at the time.

However, I believe that these next three *key events* are specifically the "*these things*" Jesus referred to. The next three events will not, cannot, be missed or mistaken.

## Decoder Ring

Jumping to the middle of the Olivet Discourse we find an important passage that lays out the **key events** to pay attention to. This is your “**decoder ring**.” Everything falls into place around this straightforward teaching of Jesus.

Matthew 24:15 **When ye** therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let **him** understand:) 16 **Then** let **them** which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let **him** which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let **him** which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto **them** that are with child, and to **them** that give suck in those days! 20 But pray **ye** that **your** flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Abomination of Desolation  
Middle of 70<sup>th</sup>  
Week of Daniel

Great Tribulation  
5<sup>th</sup> Seal

21 **For then** shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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. 23 **Then** if any man shall say unto **you**, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very **elect**. ... 27 **For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.** ...

29 **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:

Cosmic Disturbances  
6<sup>th</sup> Seal

30 **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. 31 **And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

The Rapture of the Saints  
Before the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, **ye** know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise **ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near**, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto **you**, **This generation** shall not pass, till all **these things** be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Do you see the order? It cannot be clearer. This is indeed the “*decoder ring*.” For more clarity, I highlighted the **key events** in **red**. Notice the **sequencing connector words** highlighted in **green**. There is irrefutable implied sequence in Jesus words. The sequence is confirmed throughout scripture – it is always in the same order. It is not implied, it is explicit.



**References to you, the elect**, are highlighted in **blue**. This is important, in that this is **written to you and me** – not some ‘*left-behind crowd*.’ We are the “**elect**,” the **saints** Jesus is coming back for. That is, if **we** are still alive when these things take place.

## Key Events

The order is clear. These events are unmistakable. In summary, the order and key events are:

- **Abomination of Desolation**: Daniel said, and Jesus affirmed him that the Abomination of Desolation, where the antichrist desecrates the Jewish Temple, occurs in the **middle of the 70th week of Daniel**. So we are now in the approximate middle, 3-1/2 Years into the final 7 years of Jewish and world history before the Millennial Reign of Jesus.

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst (“**middle**” – *NIV, et. al.*) of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

- **Great Tribulation**: The Abomination of Desolation announces the 5th Seal, the Great Tribulation – often called the “*Time of Jacob’s Trouble*.” It is a time of intense persecution of Jews & Christians by the anti-Christ.

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the **fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the **souls of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: ... 11 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 fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were**, should be fulfilled.

- **Cosmic Disturbances**: The Great Tribulation is cut short by the **Sixth Seal**, the Cosmic Disturbances (*where moon appears to turn to blood, sun no longer gives light, stars fall from heaven*). This event is repeated throughout scripture at least a dozen times and eluded to many more.

Joel 2:31 The **sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before** the *great and terrible day of the Lord* come.

Revelation 6:12 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; ... 13 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. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 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; 16 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: 17 For the **great day of his wrath is come**; and who shall be able to stand?

- **Day of the Lord:** The Cosmic Disturbances announce the Day of the Lord – Christ’s Return – and the Rapture; it is a “**Marker Verse**.” Here we are rather deep into the second half of the 70th Week of Daniel. It is essentially God turning out the lights because Jesus will be the light, “*as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*”

Joel 2:31 The **sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before** the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the **day of the Lord** cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.<sup>10</sup> **For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened** in his going forth, and the **moon shall not cause her light to shine.**

**Trumpet:** The **Day of the Lord** is announced by the **Cosmic Disturbances**, and begins with the blowing of the **Trumpet** – blown by Jesus or His angels – it announces the **Rapture**. It correlates to the Jewish Feast of Trumpets/Rash Hashanah. (See: *Feasts of the Lord*) It is the first of the Fall Feasts, as it Depicts the coming of the Messiah (Day of the Lord) to ‘Rapture’ the Church (both Jew and Gentile in Christ) and judge the wicked.

Matthew 24:30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**,

and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 In a moment, in the *twinkling of an eye*, **at the last trump**: for the **trumpet shall sound**, and the *dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For **the Lord himself shall descend** from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first*: 17 Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall **we** ever be with the Lord.

The three key events - *Abomination of Desolation, Great Tribulation, and Cosmic Disturbances* - are the most immediate signs of Jesus Second coming. They are the most immediate and salient of the “*these things*,” Jesus spoke of in the Olivet Discourse as to what we are to “*watch*” for.

Luke 21:31 So likewise **ye, when ye** see **these things** come to pass, know **ye** that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

The first Four Seals, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, we see referenced in the portion of the text leading up to the Abomination of Desolation. Seals five and six follow, leading up to the Day of the Lord, Christ’s Return, and the Rapture. Thus, the entire sequence of events of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel is spelled out in the Olivet Discourse.

## The Sequence Again

Now, let us look at this sequence one more time, this time from Mark’s recording of the Olivet Discourse:

Mark 13:24 But **in those days, after that tribulation**, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 And **then** shall **they** see the **Son of man coming** in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And **then** shall **he send his angels**, and shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Great  
Tribulation  
5<sup>th</sup> Seal

Cosmic  
Disturbances  
6<sup>th</sup> Seal

The Rapture of  
the Saints  
Before the 7<sup>th</sup>  
Seal

## Cosmic Disturbances - God's Marker Verse



God, it seems, has a key **marker verse** hidden in plain sight. It is a neon light, of sorts that correlates to a critical moment within His eschatological timeline. Given how often it is mentioned, I am amazed at how this truth seems to fly right over our heads. It is interesting that so few understand that this, a very important event, is repeated throughout scripture for a reason – it tells us where the prophet is referring to in God's end-time sequence of events.

This is the event, the marker verse – although, first mentioned in Scripture by Isaiah, this may be the most prominent reference recorded in Joel:

Joel 2:31 The **sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before** the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

This event is the **Sixth Seal**; it is repeated throughout scripture over **23 times** and eluded to many more. It is an important marker to correlate prophecy from one prophet to another. Furthermore, it is **to us a sign** – a verse we, of all people, should understand. It was not simply repeated numerous times, even by Jesus himself, by accident or coincidence – without salience to us as believers.

So where is it pointing? What is its significance? Why did Jesus deliberately refer to it?

Notice that it is repeated in exact, or very similar, language throughout Scripture. And, in every case, as in the Olivet Discourse, it is **announcing the Day of the Lord**.

Joel 2:10 The *earth shall quake* before them; the **heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining**: 11 And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: **for the day of the Lord** is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?

Joel 2:30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the *earth*, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 **The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before** the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come. 32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever **shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered**: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the **day of the Lord** is near in the valley of decision. 15 The **sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining**. ... 16 The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the *earth shall shake*: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the **day of the Lord** cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. 10 For the **stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine**. ... 13 Therefore I **will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place**, in the **wrath of the Lord** of hosts, and **in the day** of his fierce anger.

Isaiah 24:20 The *earth shall reel* to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again. 21 And it shall come to pass in **that day, that the Lord** shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. ... 23 Then **the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed**, **when** the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. ...

Isaiah 34:2 For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. ... 4 And all the **host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down**, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. ... 8 **For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance**, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

Ezekiel 32:6 I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimst, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee. 7 And when I shall put thee out, I will **cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light**. 8 All the **bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land**, saith the Lord God. ... 13 Therefore I will *shake* the heavens, and the *earth* shall remove out of her place, in the **wrath of the Lord** of hosts, and **in the day** of his fierce anger.

Amos 5:1 Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Israel. ... 8 Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and **turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night**: that *calleth for the waters of the sea*, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name: ... 20 Shall not

the **day of the Lord** be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?

Amos 8:9 And it shall come to pass in **that day**, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

Zephaniah 1:14 The great **day of the Lord** is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. 15 That day is a **day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a **day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness**,

Micah 3:6 Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and **the day shall be dark** over them.

Matthew 24:29 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: 30 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.

Mark 13:23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. 24 But in those days, after that **tribulation**, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And **then** shall they see the **Son of man coming** in the clouds with great power and glory.

Luke 21:25 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;* 26 *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.* 27 And **then** shall they see the **Son of man coming** in a cloud with power and great glory.

Acts 2:19 And I will shew **wonders in heaven above**, and *signs in the earth* beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The **sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before** the great and notable **day of the Lord** come:

2 Peter 3: 10 But the **day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein *shall be burned up.* ... 12 Looking for and **hasting unto** the

coming of the **day of God**, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Revelation 6:12 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; 13 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. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and *every mountain and island were moved out of their places*. 15 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; 16 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: 17 For the great **day of his wrath is come***; and who shall be able to stand?

...

So what's the point? Well, first of all, it is clearly a reference to the events surrounding the opening of the **Sixth Seal** of Revelation 6:12. This, the second to last seal to be broken before the Scroll can be opened, precedes two critical events in Christian history yet to be fulfilled.

First, following on the heels of the **Great Tribulation**, it announces its end.

Matthew 24:29 "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days ...*".

That will, no doubt, be good news for those who endure this most unprecedented and horrific event in world history. In Matthew 24:21, Jesus describes this as "... *great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.*"

So why does the Great Tribulation end now? It is because the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is, at this time, about to return. The Sixth Seal or the '*Cosmic Disturbances*,' as eschatologists call it, announces the Day of the Lord – Jesus' second coming.

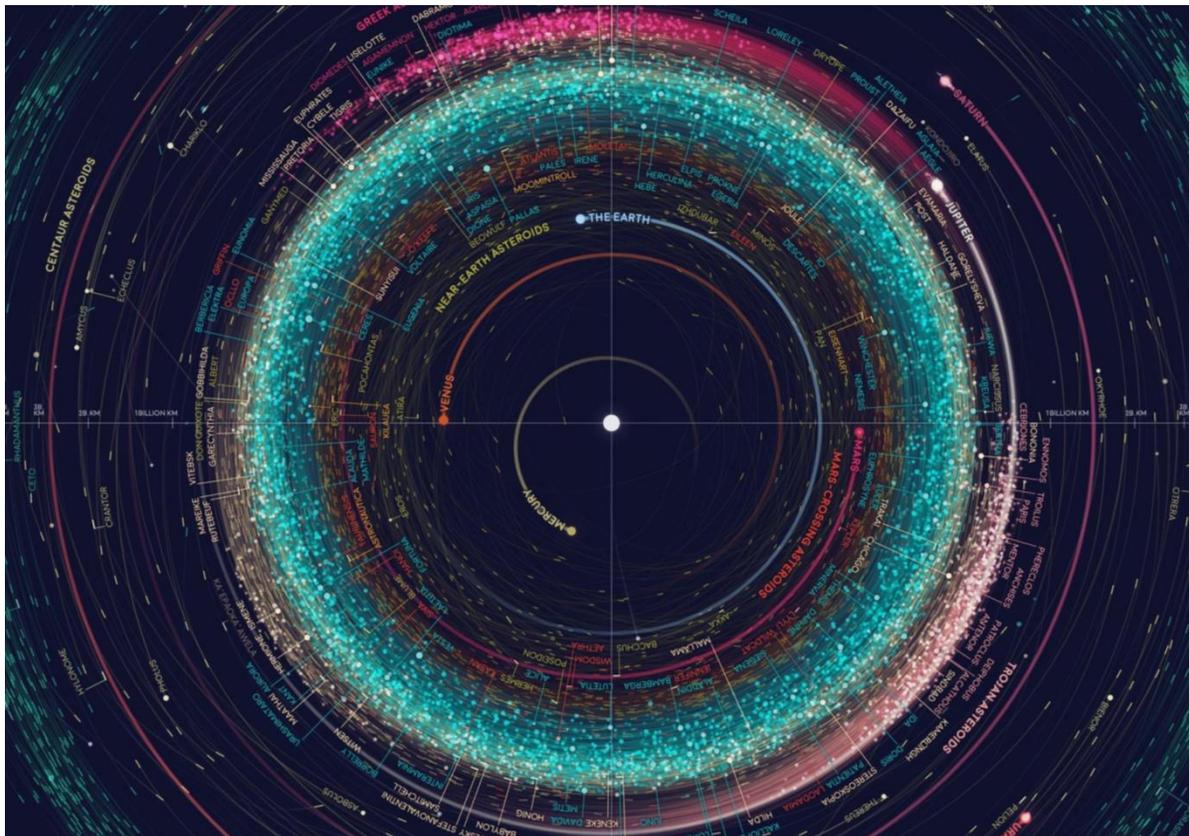
On November 12, 1833, there was a meteor shower so intense that it was possible to see up to 100,000 meteors crossing the sky every hour. At the time, many thought it was the end of the world.

## Cosmic Elements

I do not know exactly what the “*moon turning into blood*” or sun “*into darkness*” means. For, if the sun went out, it would take 8 minutes for the last light to reach earth, and we would all freeze to death in deep-space cold within a few weeks.

It has to be figurative to some degree, just as does the “*stars*” falling onto the earth. Stars are bigger than earth. For example, over one million earths would fit in our sun, a moderately sized star by comparison. The next closest star to earth, Proxima Centauri, is 4.3 light years away, or 25 trillion miles from earth. It is also many times larger than earth.

However, the phrases “*the stars shall fall from heaven*” and “*the stars of heaven fall unto the earth*” could refer to the asteroid belt collapsing into earth’s orbit. Consider the enormous band of asteroids, meteors, and other galactic objects just beyond earth’s orbit.



<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/mapping-every-object-in-our-solar-system/>

This is speculation, but I find it interesting nonetheless.

## Jesus, the Light



“The young and old now prophesy, A coming prince of peace, And last night I dreamed of lightning in the east,

Matthew 24 is knockin' at the door, And there can't be too much more to come to pass, Matthew 24 is knockin' at the door, And a day or one day more could be the last.” – *Johnny Cash, Lyrics*

Secondly, this is the big announcement, the major event. That Jesus is coming back. The **Cosmic Disturbances** announce His coming for his Saints. Now that's really good news to all “*that love His appearing.*”

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto **all them also that love his appearing.**

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and **every eye shall see him**, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

God describes Himself in Scripture often in terms of “**light.**” Jesus is described even more gloriously in references to light.

Malachi 4:2 But unto you that fear my name shall the **Sun of righteousness** arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am **the light of the world**: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the **dayspring** from on high hath visited us,

With the Sixth Seal, it would seem that God **turns out the lights** signaling Jesus' return, for He will one day be the **light of the world**. His arrival will not be missed. Notice how it is described:

Matthew 24:27 For **as lightning** that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord **Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels**, 8 **In flaming fire** taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness of his coming**:

Isaiah 60:19 The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the **Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light**, and thy God thy glory. 20 Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the **Lord shall be thine everlasting light**, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Matthew 17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his **face did shine as the sun**, and his raiment was white as the **light**.

Revelation 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and **his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength**.

Revelation 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the **glory of God did lighten it**, and the **Lamb is the light** thereof.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the **Lord God giveth them light**: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

He doesn't just come back, He gathers his elect as He returns – the rapture and our translation have come.

Matthew 24:30 "Then will appear **the sign of the Son of Man** in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and **great glory**. 31 And he will **send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect** from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne**, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands 10 And cried with a loud voice,

saying, [Salvation](#) to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.... 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These** are **they** which **came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Thus, Jesus takes the Christian (Saved Jew and Gentile) out of harm's way just before God's wrath is to be poured out on a rebellious planet for how they have mistreated His people. This is immediately **following the Sixth Seal** and prior to the opening of the Seventh, and final Seal – thus, it is immediately **prior to the Wrath of God**.

Most importantly, it is the sign that the “**Day of the Lord**” is at hand. This is an all encompassing phrase. The “*Day of the Lord*” is a phrase repeated numerous times throughout Scripture that always refers to **Christ's second coming** to gather His elect, and the beginning of the promised and long-awaited Wrath of God.

Moreover, the **war of the ages** is about to come to an end. It is a war that began in the Garden of Eden, and will culminate in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put **enmity between thee** (Satan) and the **woman** (Israel), and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head (Satan), and thou shalt bruise **his** heel (Jesus).

Revelation 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the **dragon** (Satan) stood before the **woman** (Israel) which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her **child** (Jesus) as soon as it was born.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are **Christ's at his coming**. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when **he** (Jesus) shall have **put down all rule and all authority and power**. 25 For he must reign, till he hath **put all enemies under his feet**. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The **Sixth Seal**, the **Cosmic Disturbances**, is the most immediate of the “*these things*” announcing Christ's return and the **Day of the Lord**. We see that every time the Cosmic Disturbances are mentioned in scripture, it is announcing and related inextricably to the Day of the Lord.

It will be unmistakable. The lights are turned out, so as Jesus comes, no eye will miss His coming.

Matthew 24:30 And then shall appear the **sign of the Son of man** (*Cosmic Disturbances*) 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 Second Coming is not supposed to make you stop what you're doing to wait for the Lord's return. And neither should it motivate you to focus all your attention on the events and political developments of this world. Instead, it should **prompt you to holiness as you direct your heart toward Christ**, whose coming every believer anticipates with joy." - *John MacArthur*

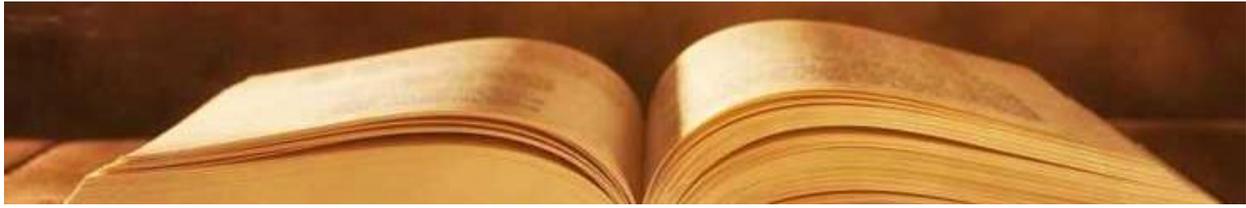
## **Blessed is He**

There is a day coming when even Israel will say "*blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord.*" Cannot one see that after enduring the Great Tribulation and the Cosmic disturbances, all the Elect and Israel will be excited at Christ's return? (See also: *Appendix: Judgment of Nations; Feast of the Day of Atonement*)

Luke 13:35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, **Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.** (Also, Mt. 23:39)

John 1:4 In him was life; and **the life was the light of men.** 5 And the **light** shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

## Correlation in Scripture



Now having looked at the clear sequence of events in the Olivet Discourse, consider the correlation of the order the events and words of Jesus with the description of John in the Book of Revelation. This parallel sequencing of events is also confirmed by the same order found in other books on the Old and New Testaments.

Event	Matthew	Revelation
<b>First Seal:</b> <b>White Horse</b> <b>The Antichrist</b>	Matthew 24:5 For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.	Revelation 6:2 I looked, and there before me was a <b>white horse!</b> Its rider held a bow, and he was <b>given a crown</b> , and he rode out as a conqueror <b>bent on conquest.</b>
<b>Second Seal:</b> <b>Red Horse</b> <b>War</b>	Matthew 24:6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <b>7 Nation will rise against nation</b> , and kingdom against kingdom. ...	Revelation 6:4 Then another horse came out, a fiery <b>red one.</b> Its rider was given power to <b>take peace from the earth</b> and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword.
<b>Third Seal:</b> <b>Black Horse</b> <b>Famine</b>	Matthew 24:7 ... and there shall be <b>famines</b> , and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.	Revelation 6:5 ... before me was a <b>black horse!</b> Its rider was holding a <b>pair of scales</b> in his hand. 6 Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!"
<b>Forth Seal:</b> <b>Pale Horse</b> <b>Pestilence</b>	Matthew 24:7... and there shall be <b>famines</b> , and <b>pestilences</b> , and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these are the <b>beginning of sorrows.</b>	Revelation 6:8 I looked, and there before me was a <b>pale horse!</b> Its rider was named <b>Death</b> , and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, <b>famine and plague</b> , and by the wild beasts of the earth.

<p><b>Abomination of Desolation</b></p>	<p>Matthew 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place `the <b>abomination that causes desolation,</b>' spoken of through the prophet Daniel -- let the reader understand ... 21 For then shall be <b>great tribulation,</b> such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.</p>	<p>Revelation 6: 8 ... And power was given ... <b>to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death,</b> and with the beasts of the earth. ... 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.</p>
<p><b>Fifth Seal: Great Tribulation</b></p>	<p>Matthew 24:9 "Then you will be <b>handed over to be persecuted and put to death,</b> and you will be hated by all nations because of me.</p>	<p>Revelation 6:9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the <b>souls of those who had been slain</b> because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.</p>
<p><b>Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances</b></p>	<p>Matthew 24:29 "Immediately after the distress of those days " the <b>sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky,</b> and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'</p>	<p>Revelation 6:12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The <b>sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth,</b> as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.</p>
<p><b>The Rapture</b></p>	<p>Matthew 24:30 "At that time the sign of <b>the Son of Man will appear in the sky,</b> and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will <b>gather his elect</b> from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.</p>	<p>Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a <b>great multitude</b> that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and <b>in front of the Lamb.</b> They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.... 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "<b>These are they who have come out of the great tribulation;</b> they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.</p>

<p><b>Seventh Seal: Trumpets The Day of the Lord</b></p>	<p>Matthew 24:37 But <b>as the days of Noah</b> were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39 And <b>knew not until the flood came</b>, and took them all away; <b>so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.</b> ... 48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; ... 50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, <b>51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites:</b> there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.</p>	<p>Revelation 6:17 For the <b>great day of his wrath</b> is come; and who shall be able to stand?</p> <p>Revelation 8:1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.</p>
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Revelation omits a specific reference to the Abomination of Desolation, and the Olivet Discourse omits a direct reference to the opening of the Seventh Seal, but parallel sequence is unmistakable.

However, regarding the Wrath of God, the implication of Matthew 24-37-39 seems clear. As *'in the days of Lot and in the days of Noah,'* the Believer will be removed immediately preceding the Wrath of God.

## More Examples

Here are a few more examples of the parallel sequence found throughout Scripture:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and **our being gathered to him**, we ask **you**, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the **day of the Lord** has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive **you** in any way, for **that day will not come until** the **rebellion occurs** and the **man of lawlessness is revealed**, ~~the man doomed to destruction.~~ 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

The Day of the Lord – The Rapture

After the Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 11:31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will **set up the abomination that causes desolation.** ~~32 With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the **people** who know their God will firmly resist him.~~ 33 "Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time **they will fall by the sword or be**

Abomination of Desolation

burned or captured or plundered. 34 When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. 35 Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time. ... 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a **time of distress** such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But **at that time your people -- everyone whose name is found written in the book -- will be delivered.** ~~2 Multitudes who~~ sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Great  
Tribulation

5<sup>th</sup> Seal

The Day of the  
Lord – The  
Rapture

Revelation 6:12 I watched as he opened the **sixth seal**. There was a great earthquake. **The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind.** ... 16 They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For **the great day of His wrath has come**, and who can stand?" ...

The Cosmic  
Disturbances

6<sup>th</sup> Seal

7:9 **After this** I beheld, and, lo, a **great multitude**, ~~which no man could number,~~ **of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues**, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, **Salvation** to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.... 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are **these** which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came **they**? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Day of the  
Lord – The  
Rapture

The sequence is always the same: *Abomination of Desolation, Great Tribulation, Cosmic Disturbances* ... **then** the Day of the Lord, the Rapture.

## The Wrath of God – The Scroll and the Seven Seals



Now I will back up through what we have previously discussed, working backwards from the **Scroll** of Revelation. It will reiterate what we have learned thus far. This will also expose a critical point of logic – that the Scroll, defining the Wrath of God, cannot be opened until all seven Seals are broken. This occurs in the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Revelation 8:1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

There is **coming a day** when God will **pour out His wrath** on this planet for how mankind has rejected His **Son**, and for how they have treated His **Elect**. It is a future event defined in detail in the book of Revelation. The timing of the **Wrath of God** is conjoined to the **Return of Christ** and the **Rapture of the Church**.

Sadly, the American **Church** has **confused** this straightforward concept to an astonishing degree. It has become a dangerous deception. It is interesting that Jesus warned us not to be deceived as His immediate response to the **Disciple's question** about His second coming – **when** and the **sign**.

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.** (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 – Decoder Ring)

**Note:** We, as Christians, are NOT subject to God's wrath ... NEVER! Just want to make that clear right up front.

So, let's come at this from a **different direction**; from the **bottom up**, as it were. Where is the **Wrath of God** – His Judgment on mankind – recorded? It is within the **Scroll** that John saw, as described in the book of Revelation.

The Wrath of God is defined **within the scroll** ('Book' – KJV; 'Scroll' - NIV). The scroll is sealed shut with **Seven Seals**. Think of the typical **Roman wax seals** of the era.



**John** was **disheartened** because it seemed no one was worthy to open the scroll. It turned out that one was – the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah; Jesus** is worthy – "*all power and authority*" has been given to Him. As such, He will open this scroll one day at the very end of time, as the final seven years of history play out to this culmination.

Revelation 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a **book** written within and on the backside, **sealed with seven seals**. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, **Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?** ... 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I **wept** much, because **no man was found worthy** to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the Root of David, hath prevailed **to open the book**, and **to loose the seven seals** thereof.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

What has to occur for the Scroll to be opened? The **Seals must be broken**. How many must be broken? All Seven of them must be broken. The Scroll cannot be opened until they are all broken.

THE 7 SEALS OF REVELATION						
White Horse	Red Horse	Black Horse	Pale Horse	White Robes	Blood Moon	Silence
1st Seal	2nd Seal	3rd Seal	4th Seal	5th Seal	6th Seal	7th Seal
						
He went forth conquering and to conquer	A sword was given to him to take peace from the earth	Measure of wheat & barley hurting not the oil & the wine	To kill with the sword, with hunger & death	White robes given to the souls slain for the word of God	Earthquake sun turns black & the moon blood red & the stars fall	Silence in heaven the space of half an hour

This is an **important key** to understanding the **timing** of God's wrath. As each Seal is broken, certain **corresponding events** take place here on earth during the **70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel**. While knowing when the Wrath of God is to take place is interesting, it is important for another reason.

You see, the **Rapture of the Church** is inexorably **tied to** the dispensation of **God's Wrath**. Both occur **at Christ's return**, the *Day of the Lord*.

God promises to take His own out of the way immediately **prior to His judgment**. **As, in the days of Lot; as, in the days of Noah;** so too, will He remove his people right before He executes judgment on the wicked. We, as Christians, are '*not appointed to wrath.*'

Matthew 24:37 But **as the days of Noah** were, so shall also the **coming of the Son of man** be.

Luke 17:28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot** ... 29 But the **same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the **Son of man is revealed**. (Carpet Bombed)

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night. ... 9 For **God hath not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord **Jesus Christ**,

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be **saved from wrath** through **him**.

In the nineteenth century, **John Darby** confused the timing of the Rapture by **conflating** the Wrath of God with the entire 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. He called the 70<sup>th</sup> week the "*Tribulation Period*." This phrase is **found nowhere in scripture**. It was coined. It has confused many. It has led to untold false teachings. This phrase has become part of all the Pre-Millennial positions.

There is, however, a time-period known as "**The Great Tribulation**." (*Also called "The Time of Jacob's Trouble"*) It occurs immediately following the "**Abomination that Causes Desolation**", as defined by Daniel and referenced by Jesus during His *Olivet Discourse*. The "Abomination of Desolation" occurs in the **middle** of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel – according to Daniel; as affirmed by Jesus.

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (*seven years*): and **in the midst of the week** (*In the middle of the 'seven' – NIV*) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) ... 21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 6:9 And when **he had opened the fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the **souls of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the **time of Jacob's trouble**, but **he** shall be saved out of it.

**"The Great Tribulation"** is a time of intense **persecution of Jews and Christians by the devil**, or rather his emissary, the **antichrist**. It is the **Fifth Seal** on the Scroll of Revelation. This period of time is NOT God's wrath. This is **devil's wrath and anger** poured out in one last attempt to kill all the people of God. Jesus said of this period, that '*no flesh would be saved if it were not cut short.*'

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.**

Jesus promises that it will be cut short by what has come to be known as “**The Cosmic Disturbances**.” This is the **Sixth Seal** on the Scroll of Revelation. It announces the “**Day of the Lord**.” The “*Day of the Lord*” coupled with the Sixth Seal is referenced 23 times in Scripture. It has to do with unprecedented signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth.

Joel 2:30 And I will **shew wonders in the heavens** and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

Acts 2:19 And I will **shew wonders in heaven** above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable **day of the Lord** come:

The “*Day of the Lord*” always refers to **Christ’s Second Coming** to “Gather the Elect” and execute judgment. Hence it is described as the “*great and terrible*” Day of the Lord. It is great for the saints; terrible for the lost. The “Day of the Lord” always follows the Sixth Seal, which immediately cuts short and follows the Great Tribulation, the Fifth Seal.

Matthew 24:29 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:

Revelation 6:12 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***; 13 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. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. ...

In fact, Jesus said when you “*see these things*” to “*look up for your redemption draweth nigh*.” **What things?** Most notably it appears to be the “**Cosmic Disturbances**”, the “**Sixth Seal**.” It likely also includes all the six-seal-events and the Abomination of Desolation that Jesus described as He sat and taught on the Mount of Olives.

But, the immediately preceding event He had just described when He said this was the Sixth Seal. The Sixth Seal, the Cosmic Disturbances, is the “*sign of the son of man*,” announcing Jesus return.

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, and lift up your heads; **for your redemption draweth nigh**.

Matthew 24:30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise **ye, when ye shall see all these things**, know that it is near, even at the doors.

The **Cosmic Disturbance** is the **sign**, the announcement, of Christ's return. It is as if **God turns out the light** wherein Jesus will be the light.

Matthew 24:27 For as the **lightning cometh** out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

**Notice**, the **Scroll is still closed**. There is one more Seal to go. Once the Rapture takes place and we see the innumerable crowd in Heaven, the **Seventh Seal is broken**. Then, and only then, is the Scroll opened by Jesus and is God's Wrath executed.

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude**, which no man could number, **of all nations**, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ... 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, **What are these** which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

So, we see a "**great multitude**" in Heaven. This can be none other than the **raptured saints**. It **correlates perfectly** to Jesus admonition to "*look up ... for your redemption draweth nigh*" following the Cosmic Disturbances. **It is found in Revelation between the Sixth and Seventh Seals – right where it should be according to Jesus**. The Great Tribulation is cut short, the Church is raptured, and then the Seventh Seal is about to be broken.

Revelation 6:17 For the **great day of his wrath is come**; and who shall be able to stand?

Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the **seventh seal**, there was **silence** in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Once the Seventh Seal is broken, only then can the scroll be opened. The following chapters in Revelation describe God's judgment found within the scroll in great detail. Just to reiterate, by this point **His Church has been removed** from harm's way.

So what is the point? Most importantly, notice that we are *six-seals* deep into the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, past the mid-point, before the Rapture takes place. Secondly, notice that the 70<sup>th</sup> week is not over at that point. How far we are into the 70<sup>th</sup> Week, I do not know.

Following the Rapture, the Seventh Seal is broken to allow the scroll to be opened. Once opened, Jesus executes God's wrath – judgment – on the earth before the 70<sup>th</sup> Week concludes.

Also, notice that the **Wrath of God does not encompass the entire 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel**. The 70<sup>th</sup> Week is **mostly** about Satan's wrath, his **persecution** on God's elect; especially, during the "*Great Tribulation*" in the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. God's wrath does not commence until after the Rapture, just as He promised, when the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal is broken and the Scroll is opened.

## Current Events

Date-setting, I refuse. And, yes, we can get carried away with watching the signs of the times. We must be careful not to over interpret current events. However, Jesus implored us to **watch and be ready**. Thus, we are to pay attention. Jesus likened it to a fig tree, when its "*branch is yet tender*" "*know that summer is nigh.*" So, "*likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near.*"

Matthew 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; **When** his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise **ye, when ye shall see all these things**, know that it is near, even at the doors. 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Based on current events, it would appear that the world is closer to the "*end of all things*" than we may imagine. The **stage was set** in 1948 with the prophetic Restoration of Israel. The end-time clock began ticking. Other prophecy is being fulfilled even now. One day, maybe soon, the final seven years of Jewish history will begin with the opening of the Seventieth Week of Daniel.

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

The spirit of the antichrist is already at work preparing for the appearance of the Antichrist. Evil men, under the devil's power, are at work creating a world government. Good news – God has this under control; Jesus will be victorious. Judgment is coming.

“They are on schedule for **world domination**. What is God doing? Actually, **God is laughing**. He is laughing at their plans. Back to Psalm 2, in verse 4 it states, *‘He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision.’* God laughs and mocks their plans. He heaps divine ridicule on them. But God’s dealings do not stop there: verse 5, *‘Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure...’* God is not only laughing at their plans—He will wreck their plans. His wrath will be poured out on their vain imaginings. The word backfire does not begin to cover the next act of God against men who try to bury the church and set up their own kingdom. The nations are the express inheritance of Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 goes on to say in verses 7-8. *‘The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.’*” – Mario Murillo

Nearly every doctrine and concept related to the return of Jesus can be found in the Torah in seed form. Moses saw it all. Most of the errors in the realm of eschatology come from not understanding the eschatology of the Torah; an eschatology shared by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse.

Over 95% of the Book of Revelation comes from and is quoting or referencing the Torah (The first five Books of the Bible) and the Biblical Prophets ... Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel etc.

We are to “*understand*” and “*watch*.” We must master the Decoder Ring Jesus gave us on the Mount of Olives to discern the signs of the times.

## Various Second-Coming Positions



Now, with the previous understanding of the order and sequence of events as described by Jesus and corroborated throughout scripture, let's consider the various positions on the timing of the Second Coming of Christ.

This first chart summarizes an over view of the high-level sequence of Jewish and Church history, past and future; especially, with respect to Daniel's 70 Week prophecy.

Seventy Sevens of Daniel and Beyond						
Daniel's 69 Weeks		Church Age	70th Week of Daniel		Millennium	Eternity
Decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple in 444 BC until Calvary in 33 AD  <b>69 Sevens</b> Dan 9:25, Neh 1:5-8		Calvary, Messiah Cut Off, until 70th week. Pentecost until 70th Week  <i>Interim Period</i> Dan 9:26	Appearance of the Antichrist until Armageddon  <b>70th Seven</b> Dan 9:27, Mat 24, Rev 6-7		1000 Year Kingdom Reign of Christ on Earth with Satan Bound  Rev 19:11-20	Eternal life in the presence of God  Rev 21:3-4
49 Years to Rebuild Temple  7 Sevens Dan 9:25	434 Years until the Crucifixion  62 Sevens Dan 9:25	<i>Unspecified timeframe</i> Jerusalem destroyed in 70 AD and the Jews were scattered Mat 24:2  Jews retake Israel in 1948 and Jerusalem in 1967 Planning to rebuild Temple	3 ½ Years  <b>Beginning of Sorrows</b>	3 ½ Years  <b>The Great Tribulation &amp; Day of the Lord</b>	1000 Years leading up to the Second Resurrection, Judgment, Second Death, and New Heaven and New Earth  Rev 21-22	Eternity in a new and perfect Heaven and Earth for the Righteous

We are in the indefinite period of time (yellow), called the **Church Age**, awaiting the opening of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. In light of world events, it is likely that this opening is not too far in the future. How long? Beats me! The world could go on for



## Pre-Millennial Positions

There are three prevalent **Pre-Millennial views** dealing with the *timing of Christ's return, and specifically, the rapture: Pre-Tribulation Rapture (Pre-Trib), Mid-Tribulation Rapture (Mid-Trib), and Post-Tribulation Rapture (Post-Trib).*

A lesser known view is called: *Partial Rapture (not shown)*. The most recent, and newest view, is known as: *Pre-Wrath Rapture*. This last position seems to maintain the closest correlation to a straightforward reading of scripture of all these positions.

## Post-Millennial Positions

Interestingly Post-Millennial views generally do not hold the millennium to be a thousand years long, rather to be an indefinite, figurative period of time between Christ first and second coming. The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel is taken to be allegorical or figurative; thus, it holds little influence on how they see the Return of Jesus.

There are two prevalent **Post-Millennial views**: *Classic Post-Millennialism and A-Millennialism*.

## Summary

View	Time of Origin	Source
Pre-millennial Views	First Century	
Partial Rapture	1800's or before	
Pre-tribulational	1830	John Darby
Mid-tribulational	1941	Norman Harrison
Post-tribulational	1973	(Robert Gundry)
Pre-wrath	1990	Marvin Rosenthal
Amillennial View	Forth Century	Catholic theologian Augustine
Post-millennial View	17th Century	Unitarian minister Daniel Whitby
<i>Pan-millennial View</i>		

The humorous view called, Pan-Millennialism: that it will '*pan-out in the end,*' is really not all that funny. It basically suggests that '*I don't really care.*' It is usually used as a dodge, a means to remain ignorant of End-Time Events. Jesus implored us to watch and be ready.

Avoiding the discussion is not a proper approach to being ready. At least 25% and I have heard as high as 35%, of our Bibles deal with the return of Christ. With that much information, it strikes me that God wanted us to be aware – to be informed. As such, we should take it seriously.

## Assessment

Based on my understanding of the Olivet Discourse and Revelation, I would contend that all of the common positions are incorrect. That is, with the exception of the newest Pre-Wrath Rapture position.

This new position places Christ's return and the Rapture immediately before the Seventh Seal is broken. Once the Seventh Seal is broken, the Scroll of Revelation is opened. Once the scroll is opened, the Wrath of God is executed upon the nations of the world. I believe that the Pre-Wrath Rapture position is correct, as it follows Jesus' description.

- **Abomination of Desolation** occurs in the Middle of the 70th Week of Daniel, according to Daniel,
- **Great Tribulation** (5th Seal) starts immediately after the Abomination of Desolation,
- **Cosmic Disturbances** (6th Seal) cut short the Great Tribulation,
- **The Day of the Lord**, our Rapture, is signaled by the Cosmic Disturbances (6th Seal), and
- **God's wrath** commences thereafter, only upon the opening of the 7th Seal.

Therefore, the Rapture cannot be prior to the 70th Week, or even at the Middle of the 70th Week. Since we are "*not appointed unto wrath*," it cannot be after the 70th Week either. The Rapture (Day of the Lord) precedes the Wrath of God (7th Seal), following the Cosmic Disturbances (6th Seal).

### Key Points:

1. In the 70 weeks of Daniel, the 70th Week is 7 years and yet to be fulfilled.
2. God's wrath is contained in the scroll. The scroll cannot be opened until the Seventh Seal is broken. We are taken out before His wrath - at the Day of the Lord. This last seal is broken after the mid-point. We are not appointed unto God's wrath.
3. Day of the Lord always refers to Christ's second coming for the Church and for judgment – thus, the opening of the scroll following our rapture.
4. There is implied sequence in scripture - exact same sequence is found in Daniel, Joel, Matthew, Mark, Thessalonians, Revelation, etc. Jesus made the sequence clear in the Olivet discourse with his choice of words - "*when, then, after, before, immediately following, at that time, not until*".
5. Abomination of Desolation prophesied by Daniel is key. Jesus showed us on the Mount of Olives that everything pertaining to His second coming hinges off of his key marker - the mid-point of the 70th Week.

The following segments dive into both the Pre-Millennial and Post-Millennial positions in greater detail.

## II - Pre-Millennial Summary

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Regarding the '**Day of the Lord,**' the return of Jesus Christ, there are two broad positions: *Pre-Millennial* and *Post-Millennial*. In other words, Christ will return either before the Millennium (The thousand years of Revelation 20), or after the Millennium.

The millennium is a period of time where Jesus will either rule the world for the last thousand years of earth history from Jerusalem (Pre-Millennium), or He will return following the Millennium (Post-Millennium). (See: *Post-Millennial Summary* for more on these 'post' positions.)

**Pre-Millennialism** holds to a literal interpretation of the end-times scripture. It sees the events in Revelation 19-20 as a futuristic, progressive chronology, which includes:

- The Rapture; The rise of a single antichrist; A seven-year end-time period
- The Second Coming of Christ; The Battle of Armageddon; The judgment of the antichrist and the binding of Satan
- The resurrection of the dead; The establishment of a 1,000-year reign of peace (the Millennium); The release of Satan and one final rebellion
- The final judgment; The beginning of the New Heaven and the New Earth ("the eternal state").

There are three prevalent **Pre-Millennial views** dealing with the *timing of the rapture*: *Pre-Tribulation Rapture (Pre-Trib)*, *Mid-Tribulation Rapture (Mid-Trib)*, and *Post-Tribulation Rapture (Post-Trib)*.

A lesser known view is called: *Partial Rapture*. The most recent, and newest view, is known as: *Pre-Wrath Rapture*. This last position seems to maintain the closest correlation to a straightforward reading of scripture of all these positions.

## Historical Perspective



There is no trace of postmillennialism (including Amillennialism) during the first three centuries of the early church. During the first three centuries, **pre-millennialism** was the predominant viewpoint, while amillennialism became a predominant view only after the time of Augustine in the Fourth Century. They were not *pre-trib*, *mid-trib* or *post-trib*, they were merely pre-millennial. However, in the centuries that followed, some theologians found serious deficiencies in Augustine's a-millennial view and began to suggest changes.

“Every single one of **the early church** writers who discussed the end times **believed that the church would face the anti-Christ**. There is absolutely not a single early church writer who believed in a pre-tribulation rapture. The early church writers are not perfect. Some were close to the apostles, and thus serve as an important witness concerning the beliefs of the early church. One must also note that some pre-tribulation teachers flat out lie, claiming they were pre-trib. In fact, this is such an incredibly important matter for body of Christ to consider.” – *Joel Richardson*

For 1,878 years, from 70 AD until 1948 AD when Israel returned to their Promised Land no prophecy was fulfilled. The prophetic world was quiet. Now, Israel is back in her homeland, and prophecy being fulfilled in rapid succession. Israel's restoration is clearly prophetic, yet so many are missing it. (See: *Miracle that is Israel*)

Pre-Millennialism expects a literal nation of Israel as part of the end-time proceedings. Post-Millennialism does not – they, in fact, allegorized Israel completely out of eschatology. Israel is the key; all events are Jerusalem-centric. Without an Israel, end-time prophecy becomes very confusing.

## Daniel's 70 Weeks



All Pre-Millennial positions are based on Daniels 70-Week prophecy. Daniel's prophecy is the framework for all Pre-Millennial rapture positions.

Daniel 9:24 **Seventy weeks** are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Daniel is prophesying 490 years (70 weeks of years;  $70 \times 7 = 490$ ) as the final calendar of the Jewish Nation – Israel.

25 Know therefore and understand, that **from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:** (69 Weeks) the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon in 587 BC. The Jews were carried off into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, their first exile. Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians in 539 BC. The Jews began returning to Jerusalem in 536 BC. The first period: 7 weeks, or 49 years, began in 444 BC with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:8)

26 And after **threescore and two weeks** (62 weeks) shall **Messiah be cut off**, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The second period, 62 weeks, or 434 years, covers from the completion of the temple until Jesus was crucified in 33 AD. Three key divisions of sevens are:

Period <sup>1</sup>	Description	Start <sup>1</sup>	End <sup>1</sup>
7 weeks	49 years for the rebuilding of Jerusalem	444 BC	
62 weeks	434 years to the crucifixion of Christ		33 AD
1 week	7 final years of Israel (the 70th week of Daniel)	<i>Future</i>	<i>Future</i>

1 - Time span must be computed in days since Jewish prophetic year is 360 days, not equal to the Gregorian year

The Crucifixion stopped the Jewish clock completing the first 69 weeks, 483 years. This started an indefinite, intermediate period of time referred to as the "*Present age*," "*Time of the Gentiles*," or the "*Church Age*" (Actually, the Church Age began at Pentecost).

"It is clear from the Scriptures that God has decreed a 7-year period at the end of the age during which time specific prophetic events will be fulfilled. However, nowhere in the Scriptures is that 7-year period ever designated '*the Tribulation period*.'" – *Marv Rosenthal*

God is not now dealing with Israel as a nation. We are in the Time of the Gentiles. God's program now is to finish the Church - the Church Age began at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit. However, God will once again deal with Israel as a distinct entity during the final week of Daniel's prophecy

So, one Week, or 7 years remains - is yet to be fulfilled. This last seven years is known as the **70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel**. When it starts, the Time of the Gentiles ends, and the final seven years of Jewish history begins. The entire world will be drawn to Jerusalem. World history will culminate around the events that will take place in Israel. It will be a time of intense suffering and persecution of Jews, and Christians – especially, those in and around Jerusalem.

27 And **he** shall confirm the **covenant with many for one week**: and in the **midst of the week** [In the **middle** of the 'seven' – NIV, et. al.] he shall **cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Here we see the antichrist making a covenant with Israel. In the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week he desecrates the Jewish temple and breaks his covenant. Jesus referenced this verse in the Olivet Discourse as He was explaining when He would return and what would be sign of His coming.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

This last seven years of the Jewish calendar, Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, is the framework for Pre-Millennial Rapture positions. When the rapture occurs with respect to this seven year period is the defining criteria for each position – before (or at the start), in the middle, at the end, or some other time within the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

The last seven years of Daniel's prophecy, restarts the Jewish clock as the Antichrist signs a peace covenant with Israel. It simultaneously ends the Time of the Gentile. The Jewish clock now has only 7 more years to run; it will contain:

- the ultimate manifestation of man's rebellion
- the revealing of the Antichrist
- the apostasy of the nation of Israel and the Church
- the Rapture of the Church – including, messianic (saved) Jews
- the outpouring of God's wrath
- the consummation of the "Times of the Gentiles"
- the spiritual rebirth of the nation of Israel
- the destruction of the armies of the world at Armageddon
- the defeat of the Antichrist and Satan.

Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in 70 AD by Titus and his Roman Army - the Jews have since had no temple, king, or blood sacrificial system – and, the Jews were scattered throughout the world from 70 AD until 1948 AD, a timeframe known as the Diaspora.

Matthew 24:2 "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

## The Tribulation Period



John Darby coined the term “*tribulation period*” in the mid-1800s as a reference to the entire 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. It was part of his Pre-tribulation dispensational doctrine. Sadly, the phrase stuck. **Yet, it appears nowhere in Scripture.**

“John Darby repositioned (the rapture) at the Apocalypse’s very beginning (*instead of [toward] the end*), a small shift with large implications. It spared true believers the Tribulation, leaving the horror to nonbelievers and the doctrinally misled ... Darby’s scheme became a pillar of the new Fundamentalism.” - *David Van Biema, a senior writer at People Magazine, The Washington Post Sunday Magazine, and Life Magazine and who served as Time’s chief religion writer*

The term serves to confuse a very important aspect of Pre-Millennialism – the timing of the Wrath of God. It was his attempt to equate the entire 70<sup>th</sup> Week with the Wrath of God, as justification for placing the rapture at the beginning.

“Nowhere in the Scriptures is that 7-year period ever designated ‘*the Tribulation period.*’ The technical designation ‘*Tribulation period*’ has

simply been superimposed upon the Scriptures, without any basis, and made to equal the final 7 years of Daniel's prophecy. The problem with the designation is **that it creates an unbiblical bias toward pretribulation rapturism.**" – *Marv Rosenthal*

Rosenthal goes on to say, "we know that believers are not appointed unto wrath, as seen in Romans 5:9. If the final 7 years are called the Tribulation Period, it is an easy leap to the conclusion that the Church will be raptured pretribulationally."

Unfortunately, the phrase has been carried over to other positions. I dare say most American Christians have no idea the term is not found anywhere in scripture. It adds a layer of confusion to understanding the sequence of end-time events.

There is, however, a finite period of time within the 70<sup>th</sup> Week called by Jesus the "**Great Tribulation.**" But, as we will see, it is a period of time, following the Abomination of Desolation. It is a time of intense persecution of Jews and Christians by the antichrist.

"The Great Tribulation is not universal in scope. It will be directed against the 'elect' of God (Matthew 24:22). They will be the specific target. It will be a time of great 'thlipsis' for them. The cause will be their refusal to submit to the Antichrist. The effect will be *unprecedented persecution* – great tribulation.

The Great Tribulation has no relationship whatever to the outpouring of God's wrath during the Day of the Lord. The Great Tribulation will be persecution by the Antichrist directed against those who reject his authority and refuse his mark." – *Marv Rosenthal*

The **Great Tribulation** is the *Fifth Seal* of Revelation; also, prophetically called the "*Time of Jacob's Trouble.*" According to Jesus, it was a finite period of intense persecution like the world has ever known, or will ever know again. He even said if it were not cut short "*no flesh would be saved.*"

Matthew 24:15 **When** ye therefore shall **see** the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea **flee** into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 **For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** 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.

Luke 21:22 For these be the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (*Satan's wrath, his vengeance*)

It is clearly a prophetic warning to those believers alive when the antichrist is revealed as he desecrates the Jewish temple ... like Antiochus Epiphanes did. It is clearly a forthcoming period of time with a defined beginning and a determined end.

The teaching that Christians will not be here when the Antichrist becomes the dictator of the world – and are therefore exempt from great persecution – is error, and actually very harmful. You see, many **Christians have heard that great persecution – or tribulation – is God's wrath**, but this is not true. As such, they expect to be 'beamed out' in the Rapture. Sadly, this is false doctrine. More sadly, is that those who believe this will not be ready for what is to come.

"The Bible does not say that Christians will overcome Satan by being raptured before he is cast down to the earth. Rather, it says, "They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; for they did not love their lives even unto death." (Rev 12:10-12)" The Bible says we are to pray for "strength" to "endure to the end," and thus escape. We do not need "strength" to be suddenly raptured. –  
*Joel Richardson*

Tribulation can't be God's wrath, for tribulation is defined as pressure, distress, suffering, or persecution, and is what the Bible says all Christians go through. Jesus said, "***In the world ye shall have tribulation***" (John 16:33), and Paul said, "***we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God***" (Acts 14:22). Great tribulation just means great pressure, great distress, great suffering, great persecution, and will affect Christians still on Earth in that last couple of years, or so, before Christ's second coming.

"And they [the ten kings] shall ... give the kingdom to the beast, and put the Church to flight" - *Irenaeus*

This "*Great Tribulation*" is great because of its severity, for **Christians will be killed for their faith**, and because of its scope, for it will occur all over the world: "*Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*" (Matthew 24:9). But who of us would not be willing to suffer and die for Jesus in view of the fact that He suffered and died for us?

"The man of apostasy (antichrist) ... shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against Christians ..." – *Justin Martyr*

The Great Tribulation we will endure for a short time is nothing compared to the eternal life and love God has given us, and which we will forever experience and enjoy with Jesus and other believers: "*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

## Restoration of Israel



Interestingly, the Jewish nation did not have to ever be uprooted from their land. All they had to do was to be obedient to God. During Manasseh's reign, God declared:

2 Kings 21:.. In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: 8 **Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers;** only **if** they will **observe to do according to all that I have commanded them**, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

Sadly, they did not pay attention to the "if" – God's condition. As a result they were first exiled to Babylon, then returned to be ultimately scattered across the world.

9 But they hearkened not ...

Jews returned to the Land of Israel from the Babylonian exile following the decree by the emperor Cyrus the Great, the conqueror of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE, also known as Cyrus's edict. As prophesied, in 70 AD, Israel was exiled again, by the Romans – this time not to a nation, like Babylon, but rather "*scattered*" throughout the nations of the world. It became known as the *Diaspora*.

Leviticus 26:33 **And I will scatter you among the heathen**, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Deuteronomy 4:27 And the Lord shall **scatter you among the nations**, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you.

The Jewish people have been re-gathering to their land for the past 130 years, from about 25,000 in the 1880s to more than 6.7 million at the present, strongly suggesting we are approaching the end-times of this Church Age (Ezekiel 37:21-23). Israel became a true nation again in 1948, and recaptured their capital, Jerusalem, in 1967.

Their neighbors are hell-bent on destroying Israel. The time will soon come when the Jewish people will be desperate for peace, leading them to sign a deal with the devil, that is, with the future Antichrist. This treaty, prophesied more than 2,500 years ago, will be confirmed at the beginning of Daniel's 70th week (Daniel 9:27).

The promises of God to restore Israel are many. The empirical evidence that this is the event long promised of God is exceedingly great. I remain in awe that any Christian could not recognize it, and even more astonished that so many deny it.

Jeremiah 31:17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall **come again to their own border**.

Jeremiah 30:3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will **bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah**, saith the Lord: and I will **cause them to return to the land** that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

Isaiah 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people**, which shall be left,

Isaiah 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: **I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west**; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Ezekiel 36:24 For **I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land**.

Ezekiel 37:21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will **take the children of Israel from among the heathen**, whither they be gone, and will **gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land**:

Amos 9:11 In that day ... **I will raise up his ruins**, and I will build it as in the days of old: ... 14 And **I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel**, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And **I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land** which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

Present-day Israel is a crucial component of all Pre-Millennial positions. So much prophecy is rooted in the treatment of Israel as a distinct entity – as a special nation.

“All of the **end time prophecy revolves around the nation of Israel**. But how could those prophecies be understood as long as Israel did not exist and there was no prospect that the nation would ever exist again?” – *Dr. Reagan, Lamb & Lion Ministry*

There is a failure of many to see Israel and the Church as distinct. This is a mistake. The ‘nation’ of Israel is part and parcel, and a key component, of eschatology. All eschatological prophecy is Jerusalem-centric. This is a critical element for proper interpretation.

**“If you get Israel (*the Nation*) right, you will get eschatology right.** ... The fair test of a cohesive eschatology is to drag it through every text. ... Evangelism to Jews is damaged because it is we cannot properly explain to Jews why their interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures is wrong. We end up having to say ‘you’re not God’s people anymore...’ ... **If you get eschatology right, you can just open the Bible and preach what it says without having to go hunting for other interpretations.** Get it right and Christ is exalted and God is glorified.” - *Tim Challies*

Much confusion sprang from the inability of many to believe that God would restore Israel. It led to many confusing end-time doctrines. However, some stood firm over the centuries on Scripture, believing that God would, just like He said through the prophets, gather the Jews from among the Nations a “*second time*” and they would “*not be removed*.” This is it. They will not be removed. This is the fulfillment of prophecy. Having no basis other than scripture, Spurgeon often stood alone as he foresaw the day when it would occur.

"If we read the Scripture's aright the Jews have a great deal to do with this world's history. **They shall be gathered in**; Messiah shall come, the Messiah they are looking for, the same Messiah who came once shall come again, shall come as they expected him to come the first time. They then thought he would come a Prince to reign over them, and so he will when he comes again. **He will come to be king of the Jews, and to reign over his people** most gloriously; for when he comes Jew and Gentile shall have equal privileges, though there shall yet be some distinction afforded to that royal family from whose loins Jesus came; for **he shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and unto him shall be gathered all nations.**" – *Charles Spurgeon*

Indeed, “*blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep (believe) it.*” I find it sad that so many could not simply believe for the reinstatement of Israel throughout the centuries before the physical restoration of Zion. Sadder still, are those who live during the fulfillment and deny it – or lack the discernment to see it. We live in exciting times for those with “*eyes to see.*”

**Summary:** This is a monumental and miraculous event that we should be paying close attention to:

- God is at work and, sadly, the Church is yawning
- God Promised Abram and his seed “**the Land**” of Israel “forever”, for an “**everlasting possession**” (Genesis 12:2, 13:15, 17:8)
- However, God warned the Israelites that when they had “*transgressed*” that they would be “**scattered among the nations**” (Joshua 23:16, Deuteronomy 28:64, Leviticus 26:33)
- Yet, God promised to “*gather*” them back to “*the Land*” (Deuteronomy 30:3), in fact, He would “**cause**” them to return to “*the Land*” (Jeremiah 30:3, 31:17, Isaiah 43:5, Ezekiel 37:21)
- Moreover, God promised “*to recover the remnant of his people*” a “**second time**” (Isaiah 11:11-12) and “**they shall no more be pulled up**” (Amos 9:11-15)
- When they had returned to “the Land”, God promised to “*comfort all her waste places ... make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden*” (Isaiah 35:1, 51:3)
- The Diaspora of the Jewish Nation lasted 1,878 years, from 70 AD until 1948 AD when God brought them back into their “*own Land*”
- No nation, once driven out, has every returned to her land – Jews have done it twice – the second time after 2,000 years when scattered all over the world
- No conquered people-group has ever retained their identity beyond 3rd of 4th generation – Jews did
- No nation has ever suffered and survived the persecution that Jews have – nearly every Super-power has made them a target – Jews survived
- Hebrew was a dead language for nearly 2,000 years – it is now the national language of Israel – its revival is considered the greatest socio-linguistic event in history
- God stated that they shall remain in “*the Land*” forever (Isaiah 66:22)
- For **1,878 years no prophecy was fulfilled** (70 AD until 1948 AD) ... now in our lifetime prophecy is being fulfilled in rapid succession; not just in Israel, but all around them
- Jesus said, “*now learn a parable of the Fig Tree ... know that it is near*” (Matthew 25:32-33) ... the “*fig tree*”, metaphorical Israel, is budding
- God is at work ... God is Setting the stage for the culmination of World History
- 30% of Scripture deals with the restoration of Israel, the end of time and Christ’s return
- We should be paying attention

It strikes me that those who could not believe for the promise of Israel’s restoration are like those Peter warns of who cannot believe for Christ’s return.

2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 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 the creation.

Yet, many men of God stood firm on God's word while all around them men were allegorizing God's clear prophecy.

"I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. ... But certainly, **if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this.** I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the Children of Israel." - *Charles Spurgeon*

"**Nothing is more certainly foretold** than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans 11." - *Jonathan Edwards*

"God still wants to complete with the Jews the plan for redeeming the world ... This is why God has preserved ... a sacred remnant of Israel ... the chosen people." - *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*



We are witnesses to God's fulfillment of prophecy regarding the restoration of Israel, after 1,878 years of prophetic silence. The end-time stage has been set right before our eyes, in our day. Yet, too many fail to see. The Church is yawning. It is reminiscent of which Jesus said to His disciples regarding their witness of His First Coming, would they not equally apply to the stage being set for His Second Coming:

Luke 10: 23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, **Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:** 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Post-Millennial and Covenant Theology confuses and blurs the distinction between Israel and the Church. Neither sees a distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel constituted the people of God in the OT, and the Church (which is made up of Jew and Gentile) constitutes the people of God in the NT; both just make up one people of God – so they postulate. This they call "*fulfillment theology*" to counter the argument. They tend to deny the "restoration of Israel." It confuses much prophecy.

"[A] result of the **Church's ignorance of Israel's role** in the plan of God is the **profound blindness** of much of the Church concerning unfolding prophecy ... defaced with errant doctrines of a Gentile-dominated church." - *Joel Richardson*

All End-time Prophecy is Jerusalem-centric. **Israel and the Church are distinct entities.** The Church is not Israel. Israel is not the Church.

Zechariah 12:2 Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about ... 3 And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

There are clear promises made to each. However, there is a contiguous relationship between the two. It is made clear in the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.

### **Abrahamic Covenant**

Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and **in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**

### **Davidic Covenant**

2 Samuel 7:8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover **I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more;** neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house. 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, **I will set up thy seed after thee,** which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and **I will establish his kingdom.** 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will **stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.** 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and **thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee:** thy throne shall be established for ever.

Every blessing the Church enjoys comes from the covenants made with Israel. We are grafted in by the grace of God.

Romans 11: 11 I say then, Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ... 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree (Israel), wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 **Boast not against the branches.** But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, **The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.** 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and **thou standest by faith.** Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For **if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**

## The Fig Tree



The Fig Tree in Scripture is often a metaphor, a symbol, of **Israel**, God's people.

Matthew 21:19 And when he saw a **fig tree** in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

Matthew 21:20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the **fig tree** withered away!

Matthew 24:32 **Now learn a parable of the fig tree;** When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

Specifically, the metaphor seems to apply in this way:

- A **fruitful fig tree** is a fig tree, an Israel, in right relationship to God. It is one that has kept His commands and honors the Lord. It is a symbol of God's people who love the Lord with all their heart.
- An **unfruitful fig tree** is a fig tree out of relationship with God, one in a improper relationship with God. It is an Israel, God's people, who while have not completely abandoned and turned away from God, compromise with the world and live with one foot in sin and the other seeking God.

- A **withered, dead fig tree** is a fig tree, Israel, who has turned away from God. It is a symbol of God's judgment and chastisement for sin. Israel was destroyed in 70 AD, sent into worldwide Diaspora, and is now being restored before our very eyes. It foretells of a sad dark age, the age of the gentiles. A time when Israel will be trodden under foot, persecuted, and rejected of all Nations.
- A **budding fig tree**, the Israel to come, is a fig tree, God's people, brought back into the fellowship and blessing of God after a long winter. It is one whom God shows His mercy and grace to. One that God lovingly restores. One that has been judged, chastised, purged, and then restored to right relationship with God. This is the Israel to come. The one that will say, "*blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord!*" The one from whom Christ, our Lord, will rule the world.

There is a parallel between the fig tree and Israel, which for nearly two millennia, failed to produce the spiritual fruit that God so dearly desired. But then came the reestablishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, and the tree has budded.

## Day of the Lord



The phrase "**Day of the Lord**" in scripture refers to Christ's return to gather the elect, pour out God's wrath on sinful mankind, judge the nations, and inaugurate His earthly millennial reign.

The "*Day of the Lord*" is mentioned 29 times in the King James Version. The "*Day of God*" is mentioned 2 times. The "*Day of Wrath*" is mentioned 4 times. Similar references are mentioned numerous more times. In every case it is referring to Christ's Second coming. In all, there are over 50 references to this important future event.

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the *great and terrible* **day of the Lord** come.

Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable **day of the Lord** come:

Revelation 6:12 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; ... 17 For the **great day of his wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand?

2 Thessalonians 2:2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, *except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

It is often referred to as the “*great*” and “*terrible*” Day of the Lord. It is great for those in Christ, the saved; it is terrible for all others, the unsaved. See the Appendix for a complete list of “*Day of the Lord*” scripture references.

## The Rapture



While the word “rapture” is never specifically found in the Bible, the concept is deeply rooted in God’s Word. “*Rapture*” is from the Latin word “*rapturo*,” which means “*to catch away*.” Consider these scripture verses:

Matthew 24:30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a **trumpet**, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in **the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**. (*1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*)

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trump** of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together unto him**,

The various pre-millennial views are debating the timing of the rapture with respect the Seventieth Week of Daniel framework. It is the moment that Jesus returns to gather His elect, before He pours out His wrath on mankind. The rapture marks the end of the Church Age.

“Now the privilege of this favour awaits [**to go without dying** at the rapture] those who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist, deserve by an instantaneous death, which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints; as he writes to the Thessalonians.” – *Tertullian*

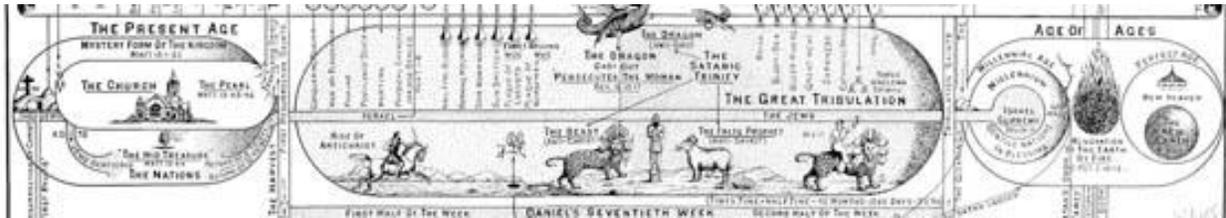
1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep (die)**, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Judgment is coming for unbelievers, but the **Rapture – the greatest rescue operation this world has ever seen** – is coming for believers who “*endure until the end.*” Be thankful, should you be alive at Christ’s return, that you will be rescued not only from God’s wrath on mankind, but also from the eternal wrath – that very painful, everlasting Lake of Fire: “*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

*When He shall come with trumpet sound; Oh may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in his righteousness alone; Faultless to stand before the throne.*

- Hymn - *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

## The Millennium



Millennium means 1,000 years. Pre-millennial positions believe that Jesus Christ will return before the Millennium (a literal, final thousand years of earth history). They hold to a literal interpretation of Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him **a thousand years**, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **till the thousand years should be fulfilled**: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again **until the thousand years were finished**. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years**. 7 And **when the thousand years are expired**, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

In contrast to Pre-Millennial positions, Post-Millennial views hold that the millennium is a figurative, indefinite period of time. Yet, even a cursory reading of this passage reveals that "*the thousand years*" would appear to be 1,000 years. Not an indefinite period of time. The text seems unnecessarily specific if it is to be taken figuratively. In fact, this is what the Jewish *Feast of Tabernacles* is about – Jesus living with, dwelling with, tabernacling with man for a thousand years.

All Pre-Millennial positions hold to the belief that after: *the return of Christ, the Rapture, the execution of the Wrath of God defined in the Scroll of Revelation, the battle of Armageddon, and the Judgment of the nations*, Jesus will rule the surviving nations,

along with the saints, from Jerusalem for 1,000 years. The 1,000 years ends with Jesus creating a “*new heaven and new earth.*”

## The Abomination of Desolation



The **Abomination of Desolation** is a critical ingredient in evaluating the various Pre-Millennial positions.

Post-Millennialists all believe in some variant that **Antiochus Epiphanes** fulfilled Daniel’s prophesied Abomination of Desolation during the Maccabean era.

The problem is that Antiochus Epiphanes never entered into a seven-year covenant with Israel (as we are told the antichrist will one day), even though he promised peace. Furthermore, and most damning, Jesus confirmed it to be a **future event** over 200 years after Antiochus lived.

Daniel foretold of the antichrist desecrating the Jewish Temple in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and **in the midst [middle – NIV] of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations** he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Jesus shared this as He taught from the Mount of Olives in what is known as the ‘*Olivet Discourse.*’ The Olivet Discourse is the ‘*decoder-ring*’ to all of eschatology. In fact, this verse from the Olivet Discourse may be the most important scripture in all of eschatology:

Matthew 24:15 **When** ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Jesus uses the **Abomination of Desolation** as a key marker. This verse ties us back to Daniel’s prophecy, and, thusly, we know Jesus is referring to the approximate middle of the future Seventieth Week of Daniel. All that follows in Jesus’ Olivet Discourse is,

therefore, after the mid-point of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. This event signals the start of the **Great Tribulation** discussed earlier.

## The Wrath of God



Jesus Christ is coming to judge the world (Psalm 98:9), and you don't want to be here when it happens, for it will be a fierce and fiery world-wide devastation. This is the great and holy wrath of God, often called the "*Day of the Lord*," and it will be directed at unbelievers who are on Earth at the return of Christ. But, **Christians living on Earth at that time will be supernaturally rescued immediately prior to this wrath to come.**

Thus, there is **coming a day** when God will **pour out His wrath** on this planet for how mankind has rejected His Son, and for how they have treated His Elect – Christians and Jews. It is a future event defined in detail in the book of Revelation. The timing of the **Wrath of God** is **conjoined** to the **Return of Christ** and the **Rapture of the Church**.

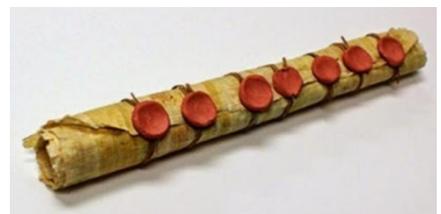
Sadly, the American **Church** has **confused** this straightforward concept to an astonishing degree. It has become a dangerous deception. It is interesting that Jesus warned us not to be deceived as His immediate response to the **Disciple's two-part question** about His second coming – **when** and the **sign** of His coming.

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.** (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 – Decoder Ring)

## The Scroll of Revelation

So, let's come at this from a **different direction**; from the **bottom up**, as it were. Where is the **Wrath of God** – His Judgment on mankind – recorded? It is within the **Scroll** that John saw, as described in the book of Revelation.

The Wrath of God is defined **within the scroll** ('Book' – KJV; 'Scroll' - NIV). The scroll is sealed shut with **Seven Seals**. I think of the typical **Roman wax seals** of the era.



**John** was **disheartened** because it seemed no one was worthy to open the scroll. It turned out that one was – the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah; Jesus** is worthy – "*all power and authority*" has been given to Him. As such, He will open this scroll one day at the very end of time, as the final seven years of history play out to this culmination.

Revelation 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a **book** written within and on the backside, **sealed with seven seals**. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, **Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?** ... 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I **wept** much, because **no man was found worthy** to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, the Root of David, hath prevailed **to open the book**, and **to loose the seven seals** thereof.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth**.

What has to occur for the Scroll to be opened? The **Seals must be broken**. How many must be broken? All Seven of them must be broken. The Scroll cannot be opened until they are all broken.

This is an important key to understanding the timing of God's wrath. As each Seal is broken, certain **corresponding events** take place here on earth during the **70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel**. While knowing when the Wrath of God is to take place is interesting, it is important for another reason.

You see, the **Rapture of the Church** is inexorably **tied to** the dispensation of **God's Wrath**. Both occur **at Christ's return** – the *Day of the Lord*.

God promises to take His own out of the way immediately *prior to His judgment*. **As, in the days of Lot; as, in the days of Noah**; so too, will He remove his people right before He executes judgment on the wicked. We, as Christians, are '*not appointed to wrath*.'

Matthew 24:37 But **as the days of Noah** were, so shall also the **coming of the Son of man** be.

Luke 17:28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot** ... 29 But the **same day** that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the **Son of man is revealed**.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night. ... 9 For **God hath not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord **Jesus Christ**,

Romans 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be **saved from wrath** through **him**.

In the nineteenth century, **John Darby** confused the timing of the Rapture by **conflating** the Wrath of God with the entire 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. He called the 70<sup>th</sup> week the “*Tribulation Period*.” This phrase is **found nowhere in scripture**. It was coined. It has confused many. It has led to untold false teachings.

### **Great Tribulation – Fifth Seal**

There is, however, a time-period known as the “**Great Tribulation**.” (*Also called, “The Time of Jacob’s Trouble.”*) It occurs immediately following the “**Abomination that Causes Desolation**”, as defined by Daniel and referenced by Jesus during His *Olivet Discourse*. The “Abomination of Desolation” occurs in the **middle** of the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel – according to Daniel; as affirmed by Jesus.

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (*seven years*): and **in the midst of the week** (*In the middle of the ‘seven’ – NIV*) he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of **abominations he shall make it desolate**, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) ... 21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Revelation 6:9 And when **he had opened the fifth seal**, I saw under the altar the **souls of them that were slain** for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the **time of Jacob's trouble**, but he shall be saved out of it.

The “**Great Tribulation**” is a time of intense persecution of Jews and Christians **by the devil**. It is the **Fifth Seal** on the Scroll of Revelation. This period of time is NOT God’s wrath. This is **devil’s wrath and anger, his “vengeance”**, poured out in one last attempt to kill all the people of God through his emissary the antichrist.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see **Jerusalem compassed with armies**, then know that the **desolation thereof is nigh**. ... 22 For these be the **days of vengeance**, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Jesus said of this period, that ‘*no flesh would be saved if it were not cut short.*’

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.**

### **Cosmic Disturbances – Sixth Seal**

Jesus promises that it will be cut short by what has come to be known as “*The Cosmic Disturbances.*” This is the **Sixth Seal** on the Scroll of Revelation. It cuts short the Great Tribulation and announces the “**Day of the Lord.**” The “*Day of the Lord*” coupled with the Sixth Seal is referenced 23 times in Scripture. In every case the Sixth Seal is announcing the Day of the Lord. It has to do with unprecedented signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth.

Joel 2:30 And I will **shew wonders in the heavens** and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the *great and terrible day of the Lord* come.

Acts 2:19 And I will **shew wonders in heaven** above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the *great and notable day of the Lord* come:

The “*Day of the Lord*” always refers to **Christ’s Second Coming** to “Gather the Elect” and execute judgment. Hence it is described as the “*great and terrible*” Day of the Lord. It is great for the saints; terrible for the lost. The “Day of the Lord” always follows the Sixth Seal, which immediately cuts short and follows the Great Tribulation, the Fifth Seal.

Matthew 24:29 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:

Revelation 6:12 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***; 13 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. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. ...

### **The Rapture – Between Sixth and Seventh Seals**

In fact, Jesus said when you “*see these things*” to “*look up for your redemption draweth nigh.*” **What things?** Most immediately and most notably it appears to be the “***Cosmic Disturbances***”, the “***Sixth Seal.***” It likely also includes all the six-seal-events up to this

point and the Abomination of Desolation that Jesus described as He sat and taught on the Mount of Olives.

But, the immediately preceding event He had just described when He said this was the Sixth Seal. The Sixth Seal, the Cosmic Disturbances, is the “*sign of the son of man,*” announcing Jesus return.

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, and lift up your heads; **for your redemption draweth nigh**.

Matthew 24:30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew 24:33 So likewise ye, **when ye shall see all these things**, know that it is near, even at the doors.

The **Cosmic Disturbance** is the **sign**, the announcement, of Christ’s return. It is as if **God turns out the light** wherein Jesus will be the light.

Matthew 24:27 For **as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west**; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord **Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels**, 8 **In flaming fire** taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the **brightness of his coming**:

### **Wrath of God – Seventh Seal Broken**

**Notice**, the **Scroll is still closed**. There is one more Seal to go. Once the Rapture takes place and we see the innumerable crowd in Heaven, the **Seventh Seal is broken**. Then, and only then, is the Scroll opened by Jesus and is God’s Wrath executed.

Revelation 6:17 For the **great day of his wrath is come**; and who shall be able to stand?

Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude**, which no man could number, **of all nations**, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ... 13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, **What are these** which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the **seventh seal**, there was **silence** in heaven about the space of half an hour.

So, we see a “**great multitude**” in Heaven. This can be none other than the **raptured** saints. It **correlates perfectly** to Jesus admonition to “*look up ... for your redemption draweth nigh*” following the Cosmic Disturbances. **It is found in Revelation between the Sixth and Seventh Seals** – right where it should be according to Jesus. The Great Tribulation is cut short, the Church is raptured, and then the Seventh Seal is broken.

Once the Seventh Seal is broken, the scroll is opened. The ensuing chapters in Revelation describe God’s judgment found within the scroll in great detail. Just to reiterate, by this point **His Church has been removed** from harm’s way – just as in the days of Lot and the days of Noah, the righteous are removed before judgment.

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath **not appointed us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Matthew 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But **as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**

Luke 17:27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise also **as it was in the days of Lot**; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30 Even thus shall it be in the day **when the Son of man is revealed.**

## **Bottom Line**

So what is the point? Most importantly, notice that we are *six-seals* deep into the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel and past the mid-point, before the Rapture takes place. Secondly, notice that the 70<sup>th</sup> week is not over at that point.

Following the Rapture, the Seventh Seal is broken to allow the scroll to be opened. Once opened, Jesus executes God's wrath – the trumpet and bowl judgments – on the earth before the 70<sup>th</sup> Week concludes.

Also, notice that the **Wrath of God does not encompass the entire 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel**. The 70<sup>th</sup> Week is mostly about Satan's wrath, his persecution on God's elect; especially, during the "Great Tribulation" in the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. God's wrath does not commence until after the Rapture, just as He promised.

Logically speaking, the obvious conclusion is that historical Pre-millennial Doctrine: **Pre-tribulation, Mid-tribulation, and Post-tribulation** positions on the timing of the rapture are all incorrect.

- The Rapture cannot follow **Pre-trib** because we are well past the beginning – the "pre".
- In fact, we are **past the midpoint** (*after the Abomination of Desolation*) of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week and even past the "Great Tribulation". We are six seals deep.
- Likewise, it cannot be **Mid-trib** for the same reason.
- It cannot be **Post-trib** because the 70<sup>th</sup> week is not over at the time of the Rapture. There remains the Seventh Seal to be broken. Breaking this Seal allows the Scroll to be opened; thus, leading to the execution of God's wrath before the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. Given that "we are not appointed to God's wrath" Post-trib is also incorrect

This may sound a bit brash – to declare the three prevalent Pre-Millennial positions wrong. But, think of it this way, they are all mutually exclusive. Thus, by definition, they cannot all be right. They could, in fact, all be wrong – but, they cannot all be correct. So, at least two are untrue. If one is accurate, which one?

Remember that they are all doctrine of men. No doubt, each of these men would say that they rightly divided God's Word. So, if at least two are wrong, it should not surprise you for all three to be incorrect. As we look deeper into these positions, you will see that they are all based on eisegesis - the interpretation of a scripture by reading into it one's own ideas. These men did not let the plain sense of scripture guide them to their conclusions.

## The Great Apostasy



Paul tells the Thessalonians that Jesus will not come again until after a “*falling away*.” It is called by many the “*great apostasy*.” Regarding the “*falling away*” there seems to be groundwork being laid within Pre-Tribulational doctrine to pave the way. It will be large:

Revelation 20:8 And [antichrist] shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: **the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.**

Consider this thought. Who is the America Church (where Pre-Trib is the prevalent belief system) expecting first? Jesus Christ. It is their doctrine of “*immanence*.” Who is the **first horseman** of the apocalypse, the First Seal? The antichrist.

“I regret that more and more Christian believers are being drawn into a **hazy, fuzzy kind of teaching** that assures everyone who has ever “accepted Christ” that he or she has **nothing more to be concerned about**. He is OK and he will always be OK **because Christ will be returning before things get too tough.**” – *AW Tozer*

Can you see Satan’s potential deception? Could he not be laying the groundwork for deception and the “**Great Apostasy**.”

2 Thessalonians 2:2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day shall not come, except there come a falling away** (rebellion; apostasy) **first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;**

## Bi-fold Second Coming



Dispensational Premillennialists (Including many Evangelicals, especially in the United States) hold the return of Christ to be in two stages – hence, bi-fold. The first event is to be unseen or secret, the rapture proper, when the saved are to be 'caught up.'

The 'second coming' is the public event when Christ's presence is to be clearly seen as he returns at the end of the tribulation. The majority of dispensationalists hold that the first event (the rapture) immediately precedes the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (The period of Tribulation, as they call it.)

**John Nelson Darby**, considered the father of dispensationalism, first proposed the pre-tribulation rapture in 1827 when he espoused a two-phase return of Christ, the first phase being a secret rapture prior to the rise of the Antichrist. The publishing of the Scofield Reference Bible in 1909 and 1919--revised in 1967—that included direct references to Darby's rapture doctrine, contributed greatly to acceptance of the pre-tribulation rapture. The first known theological use of the word "rapture" in print occurs with the Scofield Reference Bible of 1909.

Numerous denominations have no tradition of a preliminary return of Christ and reject the doctrine, in part because they cannot find any reference to it among any of the early Church fathers and in part because they find its Biblical foundation weak.

During the 1970s, the rapture became popular in wider circles, partially due to the books of **Hal Lindsey**, including *The Late Great Planet Earth* and by the movie *A Thief in the Night*. Lindsey proclaimed that the rapture was imminent, based on world conditions at the time.

In 1995, the doctrine of the Pre-Tribulation rapture was further popularized by **Tim LaHaye's** *Left Behind* book series, which sold tens of millions of copies and was made into several movies.

The bottom-line is that Scripture refers to *the* Day of the Lord, *the* Return of Christ, *the* Second coming ... never two-more 'second' comings. This is a required extra-biblical addition to make Pre-tribulation Rapture tenable. In my opinion, it makes it even more suspect.

## The Antichrist – The Big Imposter



The most wicked and evil man ever, one called the Antichrist, will one day rule this world. The Bible tells us much about this godless man, which means he's an important personality, especially for the Church, for she will still be on Earth during his murderous reign.

What does the Bible tell us about this end-times' "antichrist" (1 John 2:18), this "beast" (Revelation 13:3-8), this "man of sin?" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-10).

### His Purpose

The desire of the Antichrist will be to carry out the work of the devil. The Antichrist will rule the world, bring a pseudo-peace, blaspheme God and Christ, persecute Jews and Christians, and be worshiped by unbelievers. The world, being greatly deceived, will worship this most hateful man (Revelation 13:4, 8).

### His Power

Revelation 13:2 tells us that "the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority." The Antichrist will seemingly be raised from the dead, and be possessed by Satan, whose goal is for him to usurp the rightful rule of Christ. Be assured that our sovereign God is in control, and will use the Antichrist to "execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled" (Revelation 17:17).

### His Authority

Revelation 13:7 tell us that "authority was given to him over every tribe, people, language, and nation." This evil impostor will be the head of a one-world religion, for "the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast" (Revelation 13:3). The Antichrist will be commander of the military, for no one will be able "to wage war with him" (Revelation 13:4). He will control the economy, for "except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:17).

### His Character

The Antichrist will be the vilest, most lawless, corrupt, perverted, and God-hating man the world has ever seen. He will be abundantly proud, boastful, smooth-talking, and mesmerizing, a devil of a man.

And in the latter period of their dominion, when the wrongdoers have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and be successful and do as he pleases; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people (Daniel 8:23-24).

### **His Associate**

There will be another beast, another extremely wicked man, a false prophet who will be teamed up with the Antichrist. This second beast “exercises all the authority of the first beast,” and “makes the earth and those who live on it worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed” (Revelation 13:12). This second beast “performs great signs” (v. 13) and will cause most of the unbelievers to take the mark of the beast – the mark of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:11-17).

### **His Persecution of the Church**

The Rapture of the Church will occur at Christ’s coming, which will take place after the coming of the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 8-9). Therefore, the Church will be on Earth during the rule of the Antichrist, and will be greatly persecuted by this most powerful pawn of the devil. The Antichrist will “make war with the saints” (Revelation 13:7).

The evil forces aligned with him will “hand you [Christians] over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name” (Matthew 24:9). But believers at that time should not be afraid, for “He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). And remember, Jesus Christ will be “with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

### **His Time on Earth**

At the beginning of Daniel’s 70th Week (Daniel 9:27), the coming Antichrist will confirm a peace treaty with Israel. He will then take control of 10 kingdoms, his power base by which he will rule the world. In Jerusalem, at the midpoint of this 70th Week, he will be revealed to all as the Antichrist, the one “who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

This is the “abomination of desolation” (Matthew 24:15), for the Antichrist will desecrate the temple of God. He will be given power to reign for 3½ years (Revelation 13:5) – the last 3½ years of Daniel’s 70th Week. But during that 70th Week, at a time unknown to us, Jesus Christ will return. He will rapture the Christians, and then pour out His wrath upon the world, resulting in the Antichrist’s authority being greatly diminished. Shortly after the end of Daniel’s 70th Week, at the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:20), the Antichrist and the other beast will be seized and thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

## A Privilege

I believe millions and millions of Christians will be alive on Earth during the Antichrist's short reign. If you are one of those chosen by God to be here at that time, see it as a great privilege and opportunity to be part of His special forces!

*Source: Zion's Hope - Steven J. Hogan, pastor-teacher at Hope Bible Church of Tampa since 2003.*

## The Restrainer



The **Restrainer** is a subject often debated within Pre-Millennial circles. During the **Great Tribulation** God's people, especially Israel, are persecuted by the Antichrist. Until then the "*one who now holds it back*" protects Israel from Satan.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again.

Israel's Guardian - the restrainer, will remove himself, or be "*taken out of the way,*" and Israel will no longer be protected:

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the **one who now holds it back** will continue to do so till he is **taken out of the way**. 8 And **then the lawless one will be revealed**, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

The antichrist, the "*lawless one will be revealed,*" at the Abomination of Desolation. This is at the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. The Antichrist is now established and is free to persecute the Jew for 3-1/2 years::

Revelation 13:5 **The beast was given** a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his **authority for forty-two months**.

And he will bring the Great Tribulation to Israel:

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because **the devil has gone**

**down to you!** He is **filled with fury**, because he **knows that his time is short**.

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be **great distress**, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now -- and never to be equaled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

The Time of Jacob's trouble is upon Israel:

Jeremiah 30:7 How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a **time of trouble for Jacob**, but he will be saved out of it.

But the time was cut short:

Matthew 24:22 If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but **for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened**.

When Israel wouldn't listen to Elisha, God sent the Assyrians; with Jeremiah, God sent the Babylonians; She wouldn't listen to Jesus and God sent the Romans. Israel's heart gets harder and harder. The Great Tribulation will break the self-sufficiency of the Jews so that they will be willing to accept Christ:

Daniel 12:7 The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "**It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed.**"

God now intervenes, cuts the Great Tribulation short with the Sixth Seal, the Cosmic Disturbance. This is the Day of the Lord where He will come to gather His elect, and pour out His wrath:

Isaiah 66:15 See, **the LORD is coming with fire**, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. 16 For with fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men, and many will be those slain by the LORD.

So, the question is: **who is the restrainer** – the one who 'holds back?' Many have speculated that it is the Holy Spirit. It is part-n-parcel of many Pre-Millennial doctrines. It is especially popular with Pre-Trib and Mid-Trib positions who claim the Holy Spirit left with the raptured Church. In a bit of circular reasoning, they postulate that the reference in the Olivet Discourse to Jesus gathering his elect, cannot be the saved Christian, because the Holy Spirit is already gone by that point.

However, the Bible is rather clear. The Restrainer would appear to be **Michael the Archangel**. He is the traditional defender of Israel, the restrainer - not the Holy Spirit: Michael is the historical **guardian of Israel**:

Daniel 12:1 "**At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.** There will be a **time of distress** such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people -- everyone whose name is found written in the book -- will be delivered.

This is clearly a reference to the Great Tribulation that begins when Michael "*will arise*". Also, He will fight with Satan in the end, Satan's last attempt on heaven:

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. **Michael** and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down -- that ancient serpent called the devil, or **Satan**, who leads the whole world astray. He **was hurled to the earth**, and his angels with him.

This all happens at the approximate middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. Michael "*stands up*" from protecting Israel, throws Satan from heaven, Satan empowers the antichrist, the antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation, and initiates the Great Tribulation.

**Time, times & Half Time = 3-1/2 years = 42 months = 1,260 days**



Here is one final detail. A question folks new to eschatology often ask is: how do we know that the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel is seven (7) years long? Post-Millennialist see it as an indefinite, figurative, and often as an allegorical, period of time. Pre-Millennialist take the Final Week of the Jewish calendar to be a literal seven years - the final seven years of earth history before the Millennium.

Aside, from the fact that the first 69 weeks-of-years prophecy was exactly 483 years from (Nehemiah) rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem to the Crucifixion, Post-Millennialist doubt the Seventieth Week is literal – a seven year period. I find this rather odd – wherein, they see fulfilled prophecy as literal, and eschatological prophecy as allegorical.

Scripture describes the important second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week in varying ways. However, if you do the math (based on a Jewish calendar) we see it confirmed time and time again as half of seven years.

Daniel 7:25 And **he shall speak great words against the most High**, and shall **wear out the saints** of the most High, and **think to change times and laws**: and **they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time**. (1 year + 2 years + 1/2 Year = 3-1/2 years)

Daniel 9:27 **He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven.'** **In the middle of the `seven'** (3-1/2 years in; 3-1/2 years to go) **he will put an end to sacrifice and offering**. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation**, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

Revelation gets even more specific, referring to the last half of the Seventieth Week defining it in both days and months – based on the Jewish calendar of a 360-day year.

Matthew 24:15 So when you see standing in the holy place `the **abomination that causes desolation**,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel -- let the reader understand -- 16 then let those who are in Judea **flee** to the mountains. (Middle of 70<sup>th</sup> Week)

- Revelation 12:6 The woman **fled** into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for **1,260 days**. (3-1/2 years)
- Revelation 13:5 The **beast** was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for **forty-two months**. (3-1/2 years)

It would seem fairly clear that this is defining a literal second half of a seven year period. Otherwise, the specificity would be unwarranted.

**Note:** The 42 months and 1,260 day (each equaling one half of seven years) references also confirm that the **Abomination of Desolation** occurs at, or near, the **middle** of the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The woman, Israel, is to flee to the mountains where they will be taken care for one half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (1,260 days). The Beast, the antichrist, will exercise authority also for second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (42 months). The references are too specific, in my opinion, to not be taken literally. It further confirms Daniel 9:27 to be literal.

## The Great Tribulation



The Great Tribulation is a very finite period during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. It begins at the Abomination of Desolation at the middle of the 70 Week, and is cut short by the Cosmic Disturbances. The Great Tribulation is the 5<sup>th</sup> Seal; the Cosmic Disturbances is the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal.

As David Rosenthal points out, the problem is not so much with the starting point of the Great Tribulation. Most prophetic commentators start the Great Tribulation at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week in connection with "*the abomination of desolation.*"

The **problem is with the time of the termination** of the Great Tribulation. It is generally taught that the Great Tribulation is 3½ years in duration; that it begins at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week in connection with the abomination of desolation, and continues until its end – 3½ years later.

Dr. Harry Ironside, John Walvoord, John MacArthur and others hold this view. They are essentially Pre-Tribulational in their eschatology. However, if the Great Tribulation is 3½ years in duration, how are we to understand the Lord's teaching that it will be shortened?

Matthew 24:22 And if those days had not been cut short, no life would have been saved; **but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short**"

When Jesus taught that the "Great Tribulation" would be "shortened," He was simply stating that it would be "*suddenly terminated.*" He was teaching that it would be "*cut short,*" that something would occur that would bring the Great Tribulation to an end before the fully intended purposes of the Antichrist could be realized.

Nowhere in Scripture is the Great Tribulation ever said to last 3½ years. The second half of Daniel's 70th Week is repeatedly referred to as lasting for 3½ years. This period of time is defined as 1,260 days. It is also directly defined as 42 months. And finally as 3-1/2 years.

MacArthur and others use a **circular argument**: (1) The Great Tribulation is the same as the last half of Daniel's 70th Week. (2) The last half of Daniel's 70th Week is 3½ years. (3) Therefore, the Great Tribulation is 3½ years in duration and not subject to being shortened.

However, they never demonstrate that the Great Tribulation and the last half of Daniel's 70 Weeks are synonymous. Nonetheless, on that assumption they conclude that

the Great Tribulation is incapable of being shortened – that it must be 3½ years in duration.

But, the two cannot be equated. The Great Tribulation falls in the early portion of the second-half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. They are no one in the same. The Great Tribulation is an early subset subset of the second-half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

The Great Tribulation of which the Lord speaks in Matthew 24 is the 5th Seal of Revelation 6. It begins at the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week and its duration is "shortened." That which cuts the Great Tribulation short is the 6th seal which, when opened, results in Cosmic Disturbance.

We can only know from God's Word that it is something less than 3-1/2 years long.

## The Elect



Who the 'elect' are in prophecy plays heavily into the defense of Pre-Tribulationists. It is especially true in the Olivet Discourse. Some Bible teachers suggest that the 'elect' does not refer to the Church. Given that in their position, the Church was Raptured before the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, the 'elect' of Matthew 24:31 cannot be the Christian.

Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his **elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

One argument is that Matthew is Jewish and to a Jewish audience, therefore the Church is not mentioned. Given that the Olivet Discourse is included in Mark and Luke, this argument falls apart. Furthermore, Jesus mentioned the Church in Matthew 16:18, well before the Olivet Discourse.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

What does 'elect' (*eklektos*) refer to in Scripture? It is mentioned 16 times in the New Testament. It is used once to refer to angels (I Tim 5:21), and once referring to Jesus himself (I Pet 2:6).

Excluding the Olivet references and the previous two usages, every other instance refers to members of the Church, the body of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's **elect**? It is God that justifieth.

Colossians 3:12 Put on therefore, as the **elect** of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

2 Timothy 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the **elect's** sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's **elect**, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

1 Peter 1:2 **Elect** according to the **foreknowledge of God** the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2 John 1 The elder unto the **elect** lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

'Elect' is never used in the New Testament to refer to Israel, and not the Church, as some imply. These folks want to make the 'elect' in the Olivet Discourse to refer to Israel – the 'left behind Jew.'

Pre-Tribulationists cannot accept that 'elect' in the Olivet Discourse refers to the Church, as it does elsewhere. To do so would be to admit that their position is wrong. Thus, in their eisegesis, they redefine what is plan in Scripture to defend their position.

"Elect" refers to the Church. The 'elect' experience the Great Tribulation. The 'elect' of Matthew 24:31 clearly refers to believer's who are raptured. It occurs after the Cosmic Disturbances, after the Great Tribulation.

Furthermore, the "elect" are those who God knows, by His foreknowledge, will "overcome" and will "endure to the end." **See: Early Beliefs – Facing the antichrist.**

## Pre-Millennial Sub-views



The verse that divides many on eschatology is:

Revelation 3:10 Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

Dispensational Pre-Millennialist generally believe that the restoration of Israel to their homeland is the fulfillment of prophecy ... God's unconditional promises to Abraham (Genesis 15:7-21). All references in Scripture to Israel, especially in Revelation, refer to the nation of Israel. The Church is not mentioned in Revelation 4-19. By returning to their promised homeland, God has set the stage for the end-time events.

However, by calling the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel the "*tribulation period*," the subject is greatly confused – I believe with willful intent based on primary source documentation. The 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel is not defined in Scripture as the "*tribulation period*." Historical and Dispensational Pre-Millennialist believe that the Tribulation Period is seven years long, equating the Great Tribulation with this seven year period.

As we have discussed, there is a "*Great Tribulation*" that follows the "*Abomination of Desolation*" which occurs at the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week. The Rapture, according to Jesus in the Olivet Discourse, takes place after the "*Great Tribulation*." Nonetheless, this debate has led to numerous Pre-Millennial positions. The positions, in contrast the Post-Millennial positions, hinge on the timing of the rapture. Interpretations on the subject of the Rapture include:

- **Partial Rapture** – Only those ready will be taken
- **Pre-tribulational** – Prior removal from 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel by Immanent Rapture prior to the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. Most common view.
- **Mid-tribulational** – Protection during first 3-1/2 years, then raptured at the mid-point of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.
- **Post-tribulational** - Church is protected throughout 70<sup>th</sup> week; Rapture, if there is one, occurs following the 70<sup>th</sup> Week (It seems pointless at this point)
- **Pre-wrath** - God will protect His own (who do not take the Mark of the Beast) to some degree during the Great Tribulation, and Rapture the elect following this time of testing before the Wrath of God, immediately following the Cosmic Disturbances.

Adherents of Dispensational Pre-Millennialism, include: *John Nelson Darby, CI Scofield, Harry Ironside, Gleason Archer, Donald Barnhouse, Hal Lindsey, Chick Smith, John MacArthur, Charles Ryrie, Charles Stanley, Norman Geisler, and Tim LayHaye.*

By contrast, please note that **Historic Pre-Millennialism** differ from Dispensational Pre-Millennialism. They believed:

- Christians remain on earth during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.
- The tribulation will purify the Church.
- Christ will return immediately prior to the Millennium.
- God's promises to Abraham's pertaining to the nation of Israel were conditional, based on their obedience.
- References to Israel in Revelation were symbolically directed at the Church. Israel and the Twelve Tribes refer to Christians.
- Some in Historic Pre-Millennialism believe that the church has replaced the nation of Israel. It is known as Super-Secessionism or Replacement Theology, or Covenant Pre-Millennialism. This view began with Augustine in the forth century.
- Millennium is one thousand years long, here on earth with the physical reign of Jesus Christ.
- Waned from the influence of Greek Philosophy that viewed all the physical world as evil – thus, there could be no earthly Millennium.

Details of each of these positions follow.

## Partial Rapture View, 1800's or before

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The modern theory of partial rapture seems to have originated in the writings of Robert Govett who published a book setting forth the theory as early as 1853. In this work he expounds his view that participation in the kingdom is conditional and depends upon worthy conduct. The partial rapture teaching transfers both resurrection and translation from a work of grace to a work of reward for faithfulness.

- Died out of favor by mid 1800's
- Not concerned with the timing of the rapture but with the subjects to be translated
- Only those watching and waiting will be taken, those who have reached some degree of spiritual worthiness (presents a real problem for the dead in Christ)
- Testing of lukewarm Christians who will be left to go through tribulation to be cleansed
- Denies the distinction between Israel and the Church
- Part of the believers will go through the 70th week

### Scriptural Support:

Luke 21:36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

Matthew 24:41 Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. 42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

### Opposition:

Limits the value of Christ's atoning death on the cross - confuses law and grace

### Summary:

Only ready believers will be Raptured out of the Wrath of God (as they equate God's Wrath to the entire 70<sup>th</sup> Week)

The partial rapture, conditional or selective rapture theory, holds that all obedient Christians will be raptured before the great tribulation depending on one's personal fellowship (or closeness) between man and God. Therefore, it is believed by some that the rapture of a believer is determined by the timing of his conversion before the great tribulation. Other proponents of this theory hold that only those who are faithful in their relationship with God (having true fellowship with him) will be raptured, and the rest resurrected during the great tribulation, between the 5th and 6th seals of Revelation, having lost their lives during this time.

Most of the Scriptural basis for the partial rapture theory is found by its adherents in exhortations to watch or look for the coming of the Lord coupled with the teaching that some who fail to watch will not be ready when He comes. Passages commonly used include *Matthew 24:40–51; 25:13; Mark 13:33–37; Luke 20:34–36; 21:36; Philippians 3:10–12; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:24–28; Revelation 3:3, 12:1–6.*

In citing these passages, little distinction is observed between references to Israel and references to the church, and passages referring to the second coming of Christ to establish the millennial kingdom are freely applied to the rapture or translation. Partial rapturists usually seize upon Matthew 24:41 as substantiation of their position: "*Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left.*" It is argued that the one taken is the one translated.

## Pre-Tribulational View, 1830, John Darby & Plymouth Brethren

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While, some trace Pretribulationism as far back as The Shepherd of Hermas (A.D. 140), most take a more recent view. Modern pretribulationism gained acceptance in the seventeenth century with the Puritan preachers Increase Mather and Cotton Mather. But, it was popularized extensively in the 1830s by **John Nelson Darby** and the Plymouth Brethren and was further promoted in the United States through the wide circulation of the Scofield Reference Bible in the early 20th century.

Pretribulationism is the cornerstone of Dispensational theology. Dispensationalism holds that both the Old Testament and New Testament are interpreted using literal grammatical-historical interpretation. As a result, they reject the idea that the meaning of the Old Testament was hidden and that the New Testament can alter the straightforward meaning of the Old Testament. Dispensationalism was a system formalized by John Nelson Darby which maintains that history is divided into multiple dispensations in which God acts in multiple different ways. Dispensationalists believe in pre-millennialism and in a rapture that will happen before the second coming.

The pretribulation position advocates that the rapture will occur before the beginning of a final seven-year period, while the second coming will occur at the end of it. Pre-tribulationists often describe the rapture as Jesus coming for the church and the second coming as Jesus coming with the church, which they call the *Second Advent*. As we have discussed thus far, this position is exegetically indefensible. Even one of its most ardent defenders admits:

“The fact is that neither Posttribulationism nor Pretribulationism is an explicit teaching of Scripture. The Bible does not, in so many words, state either.” – *John Walvoord*

Pre-tribulation educators and preachers include Jimmy Swaggart, J. Dwight Pentecost, Tim LaHaye, J. Vernon McGee, Perry Stone, Chuck Smith, Hal Lindsey, Jack Van Impe, Chuck Missler, Grant Jeffrey, Thomas Ice, David Jeremiah, John F. MacArthur, John Walvoord, and John Hagee. While many pre-tribulationists are also dispensationalists, not all pre-tribulationists are dispensationalists.

These adherents believe they will be raptured before the 70th week begins - the Rapture precedes the emergence of the Antichrist.

- Two-Stage Second Coming of Christ:

- The Rapture of the Church before Daniel's 70th Week
- Christ Returns at the end of the 70th Week before the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.
- The Millennial Kingdom is a literal 1,000-year earthly and physical reign of Christ over the world with Israel in the leading position. The kingdom is a fulfillment of the OT promises to Israel.
- The 1,000-year kingdom separates the Two Resurrections of Rev 20.
- At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be released from his bondage, lead a rebellion of those who have been born during the kingdom era, but are yet unsaved. Christ will destroy the rebellion, and after the judgments Israel and the Church will enter the eternal state of heaven.
- Rather new in origin, traced back to John Darby and Edward Irving in 1830 in Plymouth (or, more specifically to Margaret Mac Donald a 15 year old girl who had a dream/vision 2 years earlier)
- Most popular position today in America
- Followers are called Darbyists
- Darby coined the term "*tribulation period*" for the 70th Week of Daniel, in order to better make a case for the entire 70th Week being God's Wrath
- Came to the USA in 1880s, with friction, and caused splits in the church
- Popular champions include: Charles Feinberg, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Dwight Pentecost all students of the founder of The Dallas Theological Seminary, a pre-trib champion - and Hal Lindsey's The Late Great Planet Earth and Taylors The Living Bible
- Popularized by Dallas Theological Seminary and Scofield Study Bible through his study notes (1909)
- It has become a badge of orthodoxy in some circles
- Restrainer is the Holy Spirit,
- Rapture is distinct from the second advent (2 comings of the Lord), church is promised deliverance from God's wrath; two separate events.
- They began with the Day of the Lord at the end of the 70th week (Scofield 1909)
- Realizing that the rapture must immediately precede the Day of the Lord, so they moved the Day of the Lord rather than the Rapture (Scofield 1917, 2nd edition)
- Expect Imminent return of Christ
- Believe that the Rapture occurs at Rev 4:1 - the 'after this' implies that the church was thereafter in heaven, they say:

Revelation 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

- Also, believe that was no explicit mention of the Church in Rev 4-18; therefore, they must have been raptured, they contend.

- Believe that the church is exempt from the Day of the Lord's wrath and that His wrath starts at the beginning of the 70th week – therefore, the Rapture occurs before the 70th week:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Sequence of events:

1. Apostasy
2. Resurrection of dead in Christ, translation of living in Christ and Rapture of both
3. Seven-year tribulation simultaneously with judgment of Raptured
4. Christ's second coming to judge Israel and Gentile Nations
5. Satan bound, Millennial reign, Satan loosed, and Satan cast into lake of Fire
6. Great White Throne judgment of unsaved
7. Creation of new heaven and new earth
8. Eternity

### Summary:

- Stands on the doctrine of Imminence - no forewarning of Christ's return
- Believe the wrath of God, the Day of the Lord, to be the entire 70th week
- Believe that there is no implied sequence of events in Scripture
- Believe that the church will be exempted from God's wrath
- Two-stage Advent - coming for His own, and coming with his own

**John Nelson Darby**, it is believed, first proposed and popularized the pre-tribulation rapture in 1827. This view was accepted among many other Plymouth Brethren movements in England. Darby and other prominent Brethren were part of the Brethren movement which impacted American Christianity, especially with movements and teachings associated with Christian eschatology and fundamentalism, primarily through their writings.

### Macdonald

Pre-tribulation rapture, also known by some as the false **Secret Rapture theory**, was launched into prominence in 1830 by a group of people in Scotland who had become known as the Plymouth Brethren. Under the direction of John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) and others, they began to hold Prophetic Conferences.

The story goes that during one of those conferences, from a sick bed a fifteen-year-old Scottish girl named **Margaret Macdonald** went into a trance, she told them that she saw a vision that believers would be removed from the earth before the day of the

Antichrist. After her so called Vision she told them that she felt that it was Evil! John Darby began teaching the Secret Rapture in his church and it has spread like wild fire through the years up to this day in most Churches!

However, proponents of this story, like Dave Macpherson and John L. Bray, an anti-rapturist, have never been able to prove that Darby had ever heard of MacDonald or her vision. Darby himself claims the revelation of the rapture came to him when he realized the distinction between Israel and the church.

Margaret MacDonald was teaching a single coming of our Lord Jesus. This contradicts current rapture doctrine, which teaches a two-staged event - first, Christ coming for His Church and second, seven years later His return to earth.

Research suggests that **Emmanuel Lacunza**, a Jesuit Catholic priest, who in the 1812 book *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, first taught this theory. It is debated in certain circles.

### **Other More Contemporary Proponents**

During the 1970s, belief in the rapture, especially Pre-Trib, became popular in wider circles, in part because of the books of **Hal Lindsey**, including *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which sold between reportedly 35 million copies, and the movie *A Thief in the Night*, which based its title on the scriptural reference 1 Thessalonians 5:2.

Lindsey proclaimed that the rapture was imminent, based on world conditions at the time. In 1995, the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture was further popularized by **Tim LaHaye's** *Left Behind* series of books, which sold close to 80 million copies.

As a result of this marketing affect, coupled the promotion by the Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS) and its graduates, it became the most common and popular position in American Protestant Churches. It is in the footnotes of the Scofield, Ryrie, and Pentecot Reference Bibles from these DTS affiliates.

## Mid-Tribulational View, 1941, Norman Harrison

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The mid-tribulation position postulates that the rapture will occur at some point in the middle of Daniel's 70th Week. The tribulation is typically divided into two periods of 3.5 years each. Mid-tribulationists hold that the saints will go through the first period (Beginning of Sorrows), but will be raptured into Heaven before the severe outpouring of God's wrath in the second half the 70<sup>th</sup> week. Note: they equate all of the second half to God's wrath.

Mid-tribulationists appeal to Daniel 7:25 which says, the saints will be given over to tribulation for the saints "*shall be given into his [antichrist] hand until a time and times and the dividing of time,*" – interpreted to mean 3.5 years. At the halfway point of the tribulation, the Antichrist will commit the "abomination of desolation" by desecrating the Jerusalem temple.

Mid-tribulationists teachers include Harold Ockenga, James O. Buswell (a reformed, Calvinistic Presbyterian), and Norman Harrison. This position is a minority view among premillennialists.

- Rapture in the middle of the 70th week - 3 1/2 years into the week
- Newer even still, from Norman B. Harrison in 1941, *The End: Rethinking The Revolution*
- Champions include: Oliver Buswell, Gleason Archer - mostly former disenchanted Pretrib's
- A mediating, compromising position - Pre & Post - however not very popular
- Restraint is the Holy Spirit, Rapture is distinct from the second advent, church is promised deliverance from God's wrath (Pre-trib agreement), no distinction between Church and Israel
- The church is promised tribulation on earth, scripture does not teach imminence, the church is seen on earth after Rev 4:1 (post-trib agreement)
- Church will pass through first half of week and will be raptured in middle
- Don't call themselves Mid-Tribulationists but rather Pre-Tribulationists since they believe the real tribulation begins with the Great Tribulation in second half and the Church will be raptured before it begins
- Seals and Trumpets are not divine wrath - but merely the removal of restraints of protection
- Trumpets are Satan's work, God permitting

- Place last trump equal to 7th trumpet at middle of week signals the Rapture
- Seals are outworking of man
- Beginning of Sorrows lead up to Jesus and lasts 3 1/2 years

### **Support:**

- Emphasis on the first 3-1/2 years the 70th Week of Daniel, and middle of period (Dan 9:27)
- Believe Rapture in Rev 14 rather Rev 4:1
- They hang a substantial part of their belief on this verse:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

### **Summary:**

- Two-stage Advent
- Believe the wrath of God is to be associated only with the Great Tribulation and beyond
- Rapture exempts the church from God's judgment and wrath

## Post-Tribulational View, 1973, (Robert Gundry)

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In the post-tribulation position, the rapture would be identical to the second coming of Jesus, or as a meeting in the air with Jesus that immediately precedes his return to the Earth before a literal millennium. The post-tribulation position places the rapture at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week.

Post-tribulation writers define the 70<sup>th</sup> Week as a tribulation period in a generic sense as the entire present age, or in a specific sense of a period of time preceding the second coming of Christ. The emphasis in this view is that the church will undergo the tribulation. Matthew 24:29–31 – "*Immediately after the Tribulation of those days...they shall gather together his elect...*" – is cited as a foundational scripture for this view.

Post-tribulationists perceive the rapture as occurring simultaneously with the second coming of Christ. Upon Jesus' return, believers will meet him in the air and will then accompany him in his return to the Earth. In the Epistles of Paul, most notably in 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 ("the dead in Christ shall rise first") and 1 Corinthians 15:51–52, a trumpet is described as blowing at the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week to herald the return of Christ; Revelation 11:15 further supports this view.

Authors and teachers who support the post-tribulational view include Pat Robertson, Walter R. Martin, John Piper, George E. Ladd, Robert H. Gundry, and Douglas Moo.

- Rapture occurs at or near the end of the 70th week
- Christ Returns at the end of 70th Week of Daniel before the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom.
- The Millennial Kingdom is a literal 1,000-year earthly and physical reign of Christ over the world with the Church being the focal point of His reign.
- The Jews will be converted nationally and restored to their land. They will occupy a special place in a national sense, but spiritually will be part of the Church.
- The 1,000-year kingdom separates the Two Resurrections of Rev. 20.
- At the end of the 1,000 years Satan will be released from his bondage, lead a rebellion of those who have been born during the kingdom era, but are yet unsaved. Christ will destroy the rebellion, and after the judgments the Church will enter the eternal state of heaven.
- No clearly identifiable origin
- Champion Alexander Reese, *The Approaching Advent of Christ*, and Robert Gundry, 1973, *The Church and the Tribulation*, now in 6th printing

- Believe the 70th week began with John the Baptist
- The church is promised tribulation on earth, scripture does not teach imminence, the church is seen on earth after Rev 4:1
- Church will go through seven-year tribulation, "time of Jacob's trouble", but will be protected by God
- Place last trump equal to 7th trumpet at end of week
- A one-stage Advent - no distinction on comings
- The church is experiencing tribulation now
- Even more odd, some post-tribs are not pre-millennial and believe tribulation began with Adam
- We will be caught up to meet the Lord as He is coming to earth, to return immediately with Him (seem pointless to me by this point)

### **Support:**

Daniel 12:11 "From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

Matthew 24:13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

### **Opposition:**

- Eager expectation of Apostles
- Sequence of events, Rapture then the Day of the Lord (1 Thess 4 & 5)
- Church said to be delivered from the wrath of God (Rev 3:10)
- White-clad saints who accompany the Rider on white horse (Rev 19)

### **Summary:**

- Believe that only the Bowl judgments and Armageddon to be the Wrath of God
- Believe that the Church will be exempt from the wrath of God
- One-stage Advent

## Pre-wrath View, 1990, Marvin Rosenthal, Robert Van Kampen

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The Pre-Wrath rapture view places the rapture at a point during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week before the Wrath of God. This view holds that the wrath of God begins toward the latter part of a seven-year period.

References from Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are used as evidence that this Great Tribulation will be cut short by the coming of Christ to deliver the righteous by means of the rapture. This will occur after specific events in Revelation, in particular after the sixth seal is opened and the sun is darkened and the moon is turned to blood.

However, by this point many Christians will have been martyred by the Antichrist. After the rapture will come the seventh-seal is broken, the Scroll is opened, and the Wrath of God commences through the trumpets and bowls judgment. The Day of the Lord's wrath against the ungodly will follow for the remainder of seven years.

- Rapture at, or immediately prior to, the opening of the 7th Seal and the Wrath of God, with sounding of the trumpet of the archangel, sometime within the 2nd half of the 70th week initiating the Day of the Lord
- The rapture occurs following the Cosmic Disturbances, the Sixth Seal, the second half of the 70th Week of Daniel
- Newest of the new, by Marvin Rosenthal, 1990, Book: The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church
- Former Pre-Tribulationist - Reexamined all positions, and came to the conclusion, like I, that they were all wrong according to Jesus words.
- Ascribed to by Robert Van Kampen and Joel Richardson, et. al.
- Note: Effectively Pre-trib, mid-trib, and post-trib are technically pre-wrath too ... it is matter of when one defines the Wrath of God to begins
- Believe that the church is exempt from the Day of the Lord's wrath:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

- Focuses on the central issue surrounding the timing of the Rapture - the timing of the wrath of God
- Church is promised deliverance from God's wrath (Pre-trib and Mid-trib agreement)

- The church is promised tribulation on earth, scripture does not teach imminence, the church is seen on earth after Rev 4:1 (post-trib and mid-trib agreement)
- One-stage Advent - The Lord's coming is a singular event:

1 Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

1 Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. (saints = angelic beings here)

Matthew 24:3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

- Michael the Archangel is the defender of Israel, the restrainer - not the Holy Spirit. We know that there is a restrainer holding back the antichrist until the appointed time:

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the **one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.**

However, Michael is the historical guardian of Israel:

Daniel 12:1 "At that time **Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.** There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people -- everyone whose name is found written in the book -- will be delivered.

Also, He will fight with Satan in the end, Satan's last access to heaven:

Revelation 12:7 And there was **war in heaven. Michael** and his angels **fought against the dragon**, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and **they lost their place in heaven.** 9 The great **dragon was hurled down** -- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

### Summary:

- The Rapture of the church will occur immediately prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord

- The Day of the Lord commences sometime within the second half of the 70th week - after the apostasy and the revealing of the man of sin / man of perdition / man of lawlessness

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for **that day will not come** until the rebellion occurs and **the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction.

- Cosmic disturbances associated with the 6th Seal signal the approaching Day of the Lord
- The Day of the Lord will begin with, or immediately precede, the opening of the 7th Seal – NOT before, in the middle of, or after the 70th Week of Daniel
- God's Wrath, found in the Scroll, will follow.

## Pre-Millennial Conclusion:

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When these positions are debated, the timing of the Rapture tends to boil down to the timing of the beginning of God's wrath within the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. For we know that we "are not appointed to wrath." The battle rages over:

- Consistent dispensationalism
- Distinction between Israel and the Church
- Different interpretations of coming, age, wrath, and tribulation
- Sequence of the book of Revelations
- Timing of The Day of the Lord
- Significance of the 7th trumpet
- Context of the Olivet Discourse
- Doctrine of Imminence, etc....

"So many trees have been examined that it's hard to know where the forest is."

"And its easy to be left thinking you are part of the survivors of Armageddon and thankful that you escaped with only a monumental migraine." - *Marvin Rosenthal*

The rigidity of many positions has caused some interpreters to mine fool's gold, that which shines, but has no value. We want to believe that we'll be removed before the trouble, the persecution, the mark. It's also difficult to change positions once believed.

- If Pre-trib is right we've got nothing to prepare or be concerned for
- If Mid-trib is right we'll get out before it gets really bad
- If Post-trib or pre-wrath are right we had better prepare ourselves since Pre-trib and Mid-trib provide false hope, a placebo for the end.

This generation could find itself inside the 70th week, to have the occasion to resist the Antichrist and stand true to Christ. I pray that Pre-trib is right – However, I'm preparing to enter the 70th week. I personally believe that **Pre-Wrath comes the closest** to matching the events, and the **sequence of events, defined by Jesus** in the Olivet Discourse. However, we can be sure of one thing:

Revelation 22:20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

### III - Post-Millennial Summary

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“So far as I can see, every Bible passage about the return of Christ is written for a practical purpose ... to motivate our obedience.” - *John Frame*

“Men go after novel and false doctrines because they do not really know the truth. ...The Church does not determine what the Bible teaches, it is the Bible that determines what the Church must teach.” – *Charles Spurgeon*

Regarding the ‘**Day of the Lord**,’ the return of Jesus Christ, there are two broad positions: *Pre-Millennial* and *Post-Millennial*. In other words, Christ will return either before the Millennium (thousand years) or after the Millennium. The millennium is a period of time where Jesus will either rule the world for the last thousand years of earth history from Jerusalem (Pre-Millennium), or will return following the Millennium (Post-Millennium).

Although, interestingly Post-Millennial views generally do not hold the millennium to be a thousand years long, rather to be an indefinite, figurative period of time between Christ first and second coming.

There are two prevalent Post-Millennial views: *Classic Post-Millennialism* and *A-millennialism*.

#### **Allegorical Thinking**



The place and role of the ‘*nation*’ of Israel in eschatology – end-time prophecy – cannot be overstated. Without a literal Israel, large swaths of prophecy become virtually

meaningless. The immutable promises of God to Abraham, and Israel proper, are troubling with the absence of a nation of Israel in the prophetic timeline.

Post-Millennialism, (*including A-millennialism, a variant on Post-Millennialism*) began before Israel had returned to her homeland. The absence of an “*Israel*” between 70 AD and 1948 AD led to an **allegorization** of end-time prophecy. Israel once restored to her homeland dealt them a difficult blow to their beliefs – however, they deny that it is in any way fulfillment of prophecy. It has sadly led to increased Anti-Zionism.

The restoration of Israel in 1948 was a monumental miracle. Dozens of prophecies were fulfilled to the letter in this seemingly impossible event. It should instill confidence that, if God could restore Israel after 1,878 years, He can and will fulfill the remaining end-time prophecy just as recorded. Fundamentally, many over the centuries have simply not had the faith to take God’s prophecy at face value.

Post-millennialism (*including Amillennialism*) **takes prophecy, which has obviously been fulfilled, literally.** But, that which is **future is allegorized and spiritualized** when it suits their position. How convenient; although, it seems rather arbitrary.

“About the times of the End, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition.” - *Sir Isaac Newton, 1642 – 1747*

In their allegorized views, *Israel is not Israel, Jerusalem is not Jerusalem, a thousand years is not a thousand years, the Rapture is not the rapture, the Wrath of God defined in the Scroll is not the wrath of God, etc.* This seems illogical and inconsistent. It leads to endless confusion within the Church.

“When people spiritualize or allegorize the first three chapters of Genesis we call them **Liberals**, but when they do the same with the prophetic Scriptures we call them (Post- or) **A-millennialists**. ... If this is the kingdom, then Jesus is not the messiah. ... It’s too late for Calvin, but it’s not too late for the rest of you.” – *John MacArthur, “Why Every Self-Respecting Calvinist is a Pre-Millennialist”*

His point being that if Jesus literally fulfilled promises of God just as they would have been literally accepted in His first coming, how can we now take future events in a different way than it was described through the prophets? It matters to God, and thus, should matter to us. History is heading to a divinely designed and revealed end, and if it matters enough to God to reveal it in detail, it should matter enough for us to study it. Sadly, as does most doctrine of men, these views confuse the subject to a degree that many avoid the subject altogether.

“I once heard someone define the millennium as a thousand-year period of time during which Christians fight over the proper interpretation of the book of Revelation.” - *Keith Mathison*

The hypocrisy found here is astounding. In fact, Postmillennials will even accept the first 69 Weeks (483 years) of Daniel's prophecy literally, while the future last Week (7 years) is interpreted figuratively or allegorically. Some even go so far as to take the first 3-1/2 years of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week literally, while viewing last 3-1/2 years as a figurative, indefinite period of time. The logic of this line of thinking is puzzling.

"The sympathy which is reverent with what it cannot understand is worth its weight in gold." – *Oswald Chambers*

## Historical Perspective



There is no trace of postmillennialism (including Amillennialism) during the first three centuries of the early church. During the first three centuries, pre-millennialism was the predominant viewpoint, while amillennialism became a predominant view only after the time of Augustine in the Fourth Century. They were not *pre-trib*, *mid-trib* or *post-trib*, they were merely pre-millennial. However, in the centuries that followed, some theologians found serious deficiencies in Augustine's a-millennial view and began to suggest changes.

For 1,878 years, from 70 AD until 1948 AD when Israel returned to their Promised Land no prophecy was fulfilled. The prophetic world was quiet. Now, with Israel back in her homeland, and prophecy being fulfilled in rapid succession, it is hard to believe either of these positions still stands. Israel's restoration is clearly prophetic, yet these two positions deny it. (See: *Miracle that is Israel*)

## Subtle Differences



The differences between Post-Millennialism and Amillennialism are minute. In fact, it is splitting a thin hair, as it were, to separate the two. They are both *post*-millennial in the sense that they both believe Christ will not come back until after (post) the "*millennium*."

- The term **postmillennialism** refers to the belief that the second coming will occur after the millennium. Strictly speaking, **amillennialism** is a version of *postmillennialism* in this sense because amillennialists believe Christ's second coming will occur after the millennium.
- In a strictly chronological sense, the amillennialists and the postmillennialists agree that Christ returns after the millennium. In fact, **amillennialists were known as postmillennialists until the twentieth century.**
- **The two agree that the millennium is figurative**, not a literal one thousand year period, and that it "*is a time in which the gospel is preached throughout the world*" as **Satan is currently bound.**
- Those versions of **postmillennialism** that recognize the millennium to be symbolic of the entire present age *differ in only a few respects from amillennialism.*
- Whereas **amillennialism** expects the Church to experience victory and **suffering** simultaneously until the second coming (*pessimistic*), **postmillennialism** maintains a **gradual end to most of the Church's suffering before Christ returns** (*optimistic*). They expect a **golden age of righteousness** on earth, the millennium, in which the church experiences increasing prosperity and great influence on the culture.

## The Rapture



While the word “rapture” is never specifically found in the Bible, the concept is deeply embedded in God’s Word. “*Rapture*” is from the Latin word “*rapturo*,” which means “to catch away.”

“If Christ be not risen, then shall we not rise; but if he be risen then they who are asleep in Christ have not perished, but in their flesh shall surely behold their God. Thus, the silver thread of resurrection runs through all the believer’s blessings, from his regeneration onwards to his eternal glory, and binds them together.” – *Charles Spurgeon*

These two Post-millennial positions are generally lumped together with various Pre-Millennial views as positions pertaining the timing of the rapture. However, they technically are not related in that way. Neither of these two views believes in the ‘*rapture*.’ In fact, it would be rather pointless in these positions. Consider Scripture:

Matthew 24:30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a **trumpet**, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the **trump** of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in **the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and **we shall be changed**.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our **gathering together unto him**,

It sure sounds like the rapture to me. So while the various pre-millennial views are debating the timing of the rapture with respect the Seventieth Week of Daniel, post-millennialists have essentially removed it entirely.

## The Millennium



Millennium means 1,000 years. These two post-millennial positions believe that Jesus Christ will return after the Millennium (the literal, or figurative, final thousand years of earth history). It is fascinating that they do not hold to a literal thousand years, nor do they ascribe to a thousand year period where Christ will rule the world from Jerusalem. In fact, they are already 2,000 years into their metaphorical millennium, as they define it.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him **a thousand years**, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **till the thousand years should be fulfilled**: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and

I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years**. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again **until the thousand years were finished**. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years**. 7 And **when the thousand years are expired**, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

A cursory reading of this passage reveals that “*the thousand years*” would appear to be 1,000 years. Not an indefinite period of time. The text seems unnecessarily specific if it is to be taken figuratively. In fact, this is what the Jewish *Feast of Tabernacles* is about – Jesus living with, dwelling with, *tabernacling* with man for a thousand years.

In contrast, all Pre-Millennial positions hold to the belief that after: *the return of Christ, the Rapture, the executions of the Wrath of God defined in the Scroll of Revelation, the battle of Armageddon, and the Judgment of the nations*, Jesus will rule the surviving nations along with the saints from Jerusalem for 1,000 years. The 1,000 years ends with Jesus creating a “*new heaven and new earth*.”

See more detailed explanation of each position’s view on the Millennium within the two detailed Post-Millennial descriptions at the end of this section.

## Restoration of Israel



Jews returned to the Land of Israel from the Babylonian exile following the decree by the emperor Cyrus the Great, the conqueror of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 BCE, also known as Cyrus's edict. As prophesied, in 70 AD, Israel was exiled again, by the Romans – this time not to a nation, like Babylon, but rather throughout the nations of the world. It became known as the Diaspora.

Leviticus 26:33 **And I will scatter you among the heathen**, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Deuteronomy 4:27 And the Lord shall **scatter you among the nations**, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you.

The promises of God to restore Israel are many. The empirical evidence that this is the event long promised of God is exceedingly great. I remain in awe that any Christian could not recognize it, and even more astonished that so many deny it.

Jeremiah 31:17 And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall **come again to their own border**.

Jeremiah 30:3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will **bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah**, saith the Lord: and I will **cause them to return to the land** that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

Isaiah 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people**, which shall be left,

Isaiah 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: **I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west**; 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Ezekiel 36:24 For **I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land**.

Ezekiel 37:21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will **take the children of Israel from among the heathen**, whither they be gone, and will **gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land**:

Amos 9:11 In that day ... **I will raise up his ruins**, and I will build it as in the days of old: ... 14 And **I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel**, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And **I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land** which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

Present-day Israel is a '*thorn in the flesh*,' as it were, for both of these Post-millennial positions. Given that these eschatological views came about before Israel returned to their homeland, and as a result of an absence of a restored Israel, one would think that these two positions would have collapsed in 1948, or at least by 1967 at Israel's acquisition of Jerusalem. Instead they have oddly gained traction.

“All of the **end time prophecy revolves around the nation of Israel**. But how could those prophecies be understood as long as Israel did not exist and there was no prospect that the nation would ever exist again?” – *Dr. Reagan, Lamb & Lion Ministry*

They, in fact, deny that Israel's restoration is prophetic in any way. This notion leads to a whole host of prophetic misunderstanding and confusion. There is a failure of most postmillennialists to see Israel and the church as distinct. This is a mistake. The 'nation' of Israel is part and parcel, and a key component, of eschatology. All eschatological prophecy is Jerusalem-centric. This is a critical element for proper interpretation.

**“If you get Israel (the Nation) right, you will get eschatology right. ...** The fair test of a cohesive eschatology is to drag it through every text. ... Evangelism to Jews is damaged because it is we cannot properly explain to Jews why their interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures is wrong. We end up having to say 'you're not God's people anymore...' ... **If you get eschatology right, you can just open the Bible and preach what it says without having to go hunting for other interpretations.** Get it right and Christ is exalted and God is glorified.” - *Tim Challies*

These two post-millennial positions require **allegorizing scripture** – as neither position explains prophecy in normal, literal sense. ***Israel isn't Israel, Jerusalem isn't Jerusalem, house of David isn't ...*** and so on. A- and Post-millennialists hold that the **promises** made to Abraham, **Israel**, and David in the Old Testament are **fulfilled by Jesus Christ and his church** during this present age.

As such, they are essentially, Anti-Zionist. Furthermore, 'spiritualization' of scripture quickly leads to more deviant *super-secessionism* and *replacement* theologies. Worse, many in these camps are *Anti-Semitic*. *Dominion theology*, *Joel's Army*, *Manifest Son's of God movement*, and other bazaar beliefs also emerge from these camps.

"We also reject the Jewish dream of a millennium, or golden age on earth, before the last judgment." – *Swiss Reformer*

Some stood firm over the centuries on Scripture, believing that God would, just like He said through the prophets, gather the Jews from among the Nations a “*second time*” and they would “*not be removed.*” This is it. They will not be removed. This is the fulfillment of prophecy. Having no basis other than scripture, Spurgeon often stood alone as he foresaw the day when it would occur.

"If we read the Scripture's aright the Jews have a great deal to do with this world's history. **They shall be gathered in**; Messiah shall come, the Messiah they are looking for, the same Messiah who came once shall come again, shall come as they expected him to come the first time. They then thought he would come a Prince to reign over them, and so he will when he comes again. **He will come to be king of the Jews, and to**

**reign over his people** most gloriously; for when he comes Jew and Gentile shall have equal privileges, though there shall yet be some distinction afforded to that royal family from whose loins Jesus came; for **he shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and unto him shall be gathered all nations.**" – *Charles Spurgeon*

Indeed, "*blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep (believe) it.*" I find it sad that so many could not simply believe for the reinstatement of Israel throughout the centuries before the physical restoration of Zion. Sadder still, are those who live during the fulfillment and deny it – or lack the discernment to see it.

This is a monumental and miraculous event that we should be paying close attention to:

- God is at work and, sadly, the Church is yawning
- God Promised Abram and his seed "**the Land**" of Israel "*forever*", for an "**everlasting possession**" (Genesis 12:2, 13:15, 17:8)
- However, God warned the Israelites that when they had "*transgressed*" that they would be "**scattered among the nations**" (Joshua 23:16, Deuteronomy 28:64, Leviticus 26:33)
- Yet, God promised to "*gather*" them back to "*the Land*" (Deuteronomy 30:3), in fact, He would "**cause**" them to return to "*the Land*" (Jeremiah 30:3, 31:17, Isaiah 43:5, Ezekiel 37:21)
- Moreover, God promised "*to recover the remnant of his people*" a "**second time**" (Isaiah 11:11-12) and "*they shall no more be pulled up*" (Amos 9:11-15)
- When they had returned to "the Land", God promised to "*comfort all her waste places ... make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden*" (Isaiah 35:1, 51:3)
- The Diaspora of the Jewish Nation lasted 1,878 years, from 70 AD until 1948 AD when God brought them back into their "*own Land*"
- No nation, once driven out, has every returned to her land – Jews have done it twice – the second time after 2,000 years when scattered all over the world
- No conquered people-group has ever retained their identity beyond 3rd of 4th generation – Jews did
- No nation has ever suffered and survived the persecution that Jews have – nearly every Super-power has made them a target – Jews survived
- Hebrew was a dead language for nearly 2,000 years – it is now the national language of Israel – its revival is considered the greatest socio-linguistic event in history
- God stated that they shall remain in "*the Land*" forever (Isaiah 66:22)
- For **1,878 years no prophecy was fulfilled** (70 AD until 1948 AD) ... now in our lifetime prophecy is being fulfilled in rapid succession; not just in Israel, but all around them
- Jesus said, "*now learn a parable of the Fig Tree ... know that it is near*" (Matthew 25:32-33) ... the "*fig tree*", metaphorical Israel, is budding

- God is at work ... God is Setting the stage for the culmination of World History
- 30% of Scripture deals with the restoration of Israel, the end of time and Christ's return
- We should be paying attention

It strikes me that those who could not believe for the promise of Israel's restoration are like those Peter warns of who cannot believe for Christ's return.

2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4 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 the creation.

## Is Satan Bound?



Both positions, A- and Post-millennialism, also teach that the **binding of Satan**, described in Revelation, **has already occurred**; thus, they believe the devil has been prevented from "*deceiving the nations*" during the spreading of the gospel.

I find this as shocking as the allegorization of prophecy. I wish Satan were bound now; but, I do not believe that to be the case. A mere cursory review of the New Testament scripture speaking to believers, after Christ's ascension, casts this into serious doubt:

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the **devil**, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 **Whom resist steadfast** in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Ephesians 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the **spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**:

John 10:10 The **thief** cometh not, but for to **steal, and to kill, and to destroy**: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

1 Corinthians 5:5 To **deliver such an one unto Satan** for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, **that Satan tempt you** not for your incontinency.

2 Corinthians 2:11 **Lest Satan should get an advantage** of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but **Satan hindered us**.

2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is **after the working of Satan** with all power and signs and lying wonders,

1 Timothy 5:15 For some are already **turned aside after Satan**.

Ephesians 4:27 **Neither give place to the devil**.

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **stand against the wiles of the devil**.

1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the **snare of the devil**.

2 Timothy 2:26 And that they may recover themselves out of **the snare of the devil**, who are taken captive by him at his will.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you.

It sure looks like our first century believers were confident that Satan was still an active foe. Such conception leads to serious confusion in the Church regarding spiritual warfare. For why would there be a necessity for spiritual warfare if the devil is bound?

However, rest assured, he will be bound and punished one day.

Jude 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

At His return, Jesus will have the devil “*bound*” for “*a thousand years*”, during His Millennial reign on earth.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and **bound him a thousand years**, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Near the end of the Millennium, the devil will be “*loosed*” to test the nations.

Revelation 20:7 And **when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison**, 8 And shall go out *to deceive the nations* which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Then he shall be “*cast into the lake of fire*” “*forever.*”

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was **cast into the lake of fire** and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night **for ever** and ever.

## Utopian Earth



Along with the belief that Satan is bound is an underlying perception that the world will get better and better, paving the way for the return of Jesus. Postmillennialism holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a *long period of righteousness and peace* commonly called the millennium.

Amillennialists take a more pessimistic view, wherein they tend to argue that the growth of Christ’s kingdom has few, if any, visible manifestations. They believe in the reign of Christ with the saints throughout the entire present age; albeit, the focus is more on the suffering of the Church. They contend that Christians presently live in the inaugurated kingdom, as Christ reigns from heaven, where believers gradually establish a kingdom of peace on earth.

Post-millennialism was dealt a devastating blow in the advent of WWII. WWI was to be the war to end all wars. Postmillennialists expected it to be the beginning of the end of time as the world became peaceful. Expecting the world to get better and better, many discarded their beliefs in postmillennialism during and after WWII.

Once again this is a rather perplexing view of scripture. Consider a few of the passages describing the increasing wickedness and affliction foretold for the last days, as the history of this world comes to a close:

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come **a falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Matthew 10:21 And the **brother shall deliver up the brother to death**, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved**.

Matthew 10:34 **Think not that I am come to send peace on earth**: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And **a man's foes shall be they of his own household**. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

Matthew 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 6 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. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Matthew 24:12 And because **iniquity shall abound**, the **love of many shall wax cold**.

Matthew 24:9 Then shall they **deliver you up to be afflicted**, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and **shall betray one another, and shall hate one another**.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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.

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that **in the last days perilous times shall come**. 2 For men shall *be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,* 3 *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,* 4 *Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;* 5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:* from such turn away. ... 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. ... 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But **evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse**, deceiving, and being deceived.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then **sudden destruction cometh** upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

2 Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come **in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts**, 4 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 the creation.

2 Timothy 4:3 For **the time will come** when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be turned unto fables.

1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that **antichrist shall come**, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is **the last time**.

This does not sound like we can expect to usher in utopia on earth before Jesus returns. In fact, the Bible lays out a perspective that seems decidedly in conflict with Post-millennial views. The close of this present age will be marked by apostasy, not by the triumphal success of the gospel and a golden age of success by mankind

## The Abomination of Desolation



Herein is another stubborn problem found in both of these two positions. Both believe some variant that **Antiochus Epiphanes** fulfilled Daniel's prophesied **Abomination of Desolation** during the Maccabean era.

The problem is that Antiochus Epiphanes never entered into a seven-year covenant with Israel (as we are told the antichrist will one day), even though he promised peace. Furthermore, and most damning, Jesus confirmed it to be a **future event** over 200 years after Antiochus lived.

Jesus shared this as He taught from the Mount of Olives in what is known as the '*Olivet Discourse*.' The Olivet Discourse is the '*decoder-ring*' to all of eschatology. In fact, this verse from the Olivet Discourse may be the most important scripture in all of eschatology:

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

This verse ties us back to Daniel's prophecy, and, thusly, we know Jesus is referring to the middle of the future Seventieth Week of Daniel. All that follows in Jesus' Olivet Discourse is, therefore, after the mid-point of the Seventieth Week of Daniel.

## The Great Tribulation



As you might expect, the Wrath of God found in the Scroll of Revelation and the Great Tribulation is allegorized, as well, in Post-millennial views. They become merely a figurative description of the '*general suffering and persecution*' believers will face in the years between Christ's first coming and His return.

The **Great Tribulation** is the *Fifth Seal* of Revelation. According to Jesus, it was a finite period of intense persecution like the world has ever known, or will ever know again. He even said if it were not cut short “*no flesh would be saved.*”

Matthew 24:15 **When** ye therefore shall **see** the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea **flee** into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 **For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.** 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.

How this passage can be allegorized, is beyond me. It is clearly a prophetic warning to those believers alive when the antichrist is revealed as he desecrates the Jewish temple ... like Antiochus Epiphanes did.

It is clearly a forthcoming period of time with a defined beginning and a determined end. It is definitely not a depiction of ‘*general suffering and persecution.*’ For as Jesus said on the way to the cross”

Luke 23:29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. 30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

## Reformed View



**Calvin** would have known only two options, **non-millenarianism** or **chiliasm**. Since **amillennarians are technically post-millennial** (Christ returns after the thousand years of Revelation 20), **Calvin** would simply affirm he was a **non-millenarian** and argue something like an optimistic amillennial view, especially given his confidence in the spread of the gospel. Calvin took a dim view of “**chiliasm**,” i.e., *the belief in a literal*

*1,000-year reign of Christ on the earth insuring a Golden Age or Paradise will occur on Earth prior to the final judgment and future eternal state of the "World to Come".*

“(Rev 20:4) the thousand years there mentioned refer not to the eternal blessedness of the Church, but only to the various troubles which await the Church militant in this world. ... Now, to assign to Christ a thousand years, so that he would afterwards cease to reign, were too horrible to be made mention of.” – *John Calvin*

Calvin was not postmillennial - in the sense of modern postmillenarian's who believe that the earth will be effectively Christianized. Calvin's confidence was in the gospel, not the transformation of culture.

John Calvin's exposition of the Lord's Prayer all but adopts the minority postmillennial position. But, **Calvin**, and later Charles **Spurgeon**, were remarkably inconsistent on eschatological matters. Spurgeon delivered a sermon on Psalm 72 explicitly defending the form of absolute postmillennialism held by a minority camp today, but on other occasions he defended pre-millennialism.

## Post-Millennial Sub-views



The Post-Millennial positions include to positions that are not all that different from each other:

- **Classic Post-Millennialism** – Optimistic Post-Millennialism; and
- **A-Millennialism** – Pessimistic Post-Millennialism.
- **Preterism** - everything prophesied in Revelation has already taken place.

The concept of millennium comes from two Latin words, *mille* meaning “thousand” and *annus* meaning “years.” Thus, a 1,000-year Kingdom Age.

Post-Millennialists generally believe that Jesus will return after the millennium. That, through the preaching of the gospel, most of the world will be saved. Many teach that the contemporary charismatic movement has been binding Satan.

The Church will subdue the world and usher in a ‘*golden age*.’ References to the rapture in Revelation represent regeneration of those who trust Jesus Christ. They believe that we are to transform and subdue society, in order that, Christ can return. These views

lead to a host of false doctrinal views, including: Dominion Theology, Joel's Army, Manifest Sons of God Movement, etc.

Popular adherents, include: *Jonathan Edwards, BB Warfield, Augustus Strong, Charles Hodge, RL Dabney, and RC Sproul.*

Details of these two positions follow.



Amillennialists view the millennial rule of Christ as the current, but indefinite period that began with the foundation of the church and that will end with the Second Coming—a period where Christ already reigns with his saints through his church. They view the life of the church as Christ's kingdom already established (inaugurated on the day of the Pentecost described in the first chapter of Acts), but not to be made complete until his second coming.

This framework precludes a literal interpretation of the thousand-year period mentioned in chapter twenty of Revelation, viewing the number "*thousand*" as numerologically symbolic and pertaining to the current age of the church. Amillennialists generally do not use "rapture" as a theological term, but they do view a similar event coinciding with the second coming—primarily as a mystical gathering with Christ.

They do not regard mentions of Jerusalem in the chapter twenty-one of Revelation as pertaining to the present geographical city, but to a future new Jerusalem or "new heaven and new earth", for which the church through the twelve apostles (representing of the twelve tribes of Israel) currently lays the foundation in the messianic kingdom already present. Unlike certain premillennial dispensationalists, they do not view the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem as either necessary or legitimate, because the practice of animal sacrifices has now been fulfilled in the life of the church through Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

Authors who have expressed support for the amillennialist view include St. Augustine. The amillennialist viewpoint is the position held by the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican churches, as well as mainline Protestant bodies, such as Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians and many Reformed congregations.

## **Background**

- **Pessimistic** Post-Millennialism
- A-millennialism means "no" millennium
- Satan has been defeated and is currently bound.
- The Millennium is the current Church Age – no true Millennium. (Although, some of this school will identify the millennium with the eternal state)

- The Resurrections of the Just & Unjust occur simultaneously to the return of Christ.
- There is no sense in which the millennium has reference to a material, earthly kingdom.
- Future messianic blessings promised to Israel were preconditioned promises, and have forfeited the promises.
- The Church is the succession (replaces) of Israel in God's plans.
- Begun in the fourth century eclipsing Pre-Millennialism from about 250 until 1830
- Promoted by **St. Augustine**, Catholic theologian
- Augustine became disillusioned because the world didn't fit the description of the kingdom; and especially, that pertaining to a restored Israel
- He decided that the kingdom couldn't be literal - but rather spiritual
- The "*kingdom of God is in the hearts of man*" he said being fulfilled on earth now
- The *Millennium is now, Spiritually, in the "hearts of man"*
- A-Millennialism could just as well be called Allegorical-Millennialism.
- Embraced by both **Roman Catholic Church** and some Protestant Reformers including Luther and Calvin. Today popular adherents, include: JI Packer, W+EY Mullins, Abraham Kuyper, and Herschel Hobbs.
- The Reformers when they broke with Rome over "justification by faith" carried Amillennialism with them
- Amillennialism is also common among Protestant denominations such as the **Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist** and many Messianic Jews. It represents the historical position of the **Amish, Old Order Mennonite, and Conservative Mennonites** (though among the more modern groups premillennialism has made inroads).
- It is common among groups arising from the 19th century American Restoration Movement such as the **Churches of Christ**: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Christian Churches and Churches of Christ.
- It also has a following amongst **Baptist** denominations such as The Association of Grace Baptist Churches in England. Partial preterism (prophecy has been fulfilled) is sometimes a component of A-millennial hermeneutics.
- A-millennialism is consistent with **Arminianism**.
- A-millennialism **declined in Protestant circles** with the rise of Postmillennialism and the resurgence of Premillennialism in the 18th and 19th centuries, but it has *regained prominence in the West after World War II*.
- **B. B. Warfield** sets forth a belief that the **Millennium is being fulfilled in Heaven now**, as a contemporary view and most common Amillennial view now
- They reject Dispensationalism
- **John Calvin** wrote in **Institutes** that *chiliasm* is a "**fiction**" that is "*too childish either to need or to be worth a refutation.*" He interpreted the **thousand-year period** of Revelation 20 non-literally, applying it to the "**various disturbances that awaited the church, while still toiling on earth.**"

“According to **Calvinism**, God is sovereign and the only one who can determine who will be saved and when they will be saved and is the only

one who can save them, Accordingly, A-millennialism makes no sense because **it says that Israel, on their own, forfeited the promises. ... If you get Israel (the Nation) right, you will get eschatology right.** ... The fair test of a cohesive eschatology is to drag it through every text. ... Evangelism to Jews is damaged because it is we cannot properly explain to Jews why their interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures is wrong. We end up having to say 'you're not God's people anymore...' ... **If you get eschatology right, you can just open the Bible and preach what it says without having to go hunting for other interpretations.** Get it right and Christ is exalted and God is glorified." - *Tim Challies*

## Description

- Amillennialism sees Revelation 20 as a description of the reign of Christ with the saints throughout the **entire present age**.
- Amillennialists tend to argue that the growth of Christ's kingdom has few if any visible manifestations. The focus is more on the **suffering that Christ** has indicated the church will undergo.
- According to amillennialism, the present millennial age, which is characterized by **suffering, will be followed by the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection, the last judgment**, and the new heavens and new earth.
- When Christ returns *Eternity* begins, '*tribulation*' is occurring now
- They **do not believe in a "rapture"**
- Onward and upward view holds that believers gradually establish a kingdom of peace
- Amillennialist understanding is the **tension** of "already/not yet." Christians presently live in the inaugurated kingdom, as Christ reigns from heaven; yet, they **await the kingdom's full realization**, when Christ will reign on Earth eternally.
- The common denominator for all amillennialistic views is the **denial of the Kingdom of the righteous on earth before the general resurrection**.
- Amillennialism rejects the idea of a future millennium in which Christ will reign on earth prior to the eternal state beginning, but holds:
  - that Jesus is presently reigning from heaven, seated at the right hand of God the Father,
  - that Jesus also is and will remain with the church until the end of the world, as he promised at the Ascension,
  - that at **Pentecost** (or days earlier, at the Ascension), **the millennium began**, citing Acts 2:16-21, where Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 on the coming of the kingdom, to explain what is happening,
  - and that, therefore the Church and its spread of the good news is indeed Christ's Kingdom and forever will be.

## The Millennium

- Amillennialists base their interpretation of **Revelation 20** as recapitulating or re-present the events described in Revelation 19, rather than following it in chronological succession.
- The Millennium is a **period of time between the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ**
- Etymologically, **A-millennial means *no*-millennium** - Millennium is a *present reality*
- It is not that Amillennials do not believe in a Millennium; they simply believe that it is a **symbolic, heavenly reality** and not an earthly one.
- Teaches that there will be **no millennial reign** of the righteous on earth. Amillennialists **interpret the thousand years symbolically** to refer either to a temporary bliss of souls in heaven before the general resurrection, or to the infinite bliss of the righteous after the general resurrection.
- The amillennial view regards the "*thousand years*" mentioned in Revelation 20 as a symbolic number, **not as a literal** description; amillennialists hold that the millennium has already begun and is identical with the current church age.
- Amillennialism holds that while **Christ's reign** during the millennium **is spiritual in nature**, at the end of the church age, **Christ will return in final judgment** and establish a **permanent reign in the new heaven and new earth**.
- Amillennialists regard the thousand-year period as a **figurative duration** for Christ's reign, as in Psalms 50:10, where the "thousand hills" on which God owns the cattle are all hills, or in 1 Chronicles 16:15, where the "thousand generations" to whom God will be faithful are all generations.
- Some postmillennialists and most premillennialists assert that it should be taken as a literal thousand-year period; the last thousand years of earth.
- Revelation is viewed as seven historical apocalyptic sections describing Jesus first coming until His second appearance; described seven different ways.
- At the second coming of Jesus, the dead in Christ, the saved, will be raised, along with the unsaved.

## Summary

While **premillennialists** argue that the biblical **promises of a future earthly millennium are yet to be fulfilled**, **A-millennialists** believe those promises are either **fulfilled spiritually in the church** or they were conditional and the conditions were not met.

- Amillennialists **deny there will be a literal, physical reign of Christ upon the earth**. They view this reign as taking place in the hearts of believers in the church and will continue over the souls of the saints in heaven.
- Amillennialists believe that this spiritual millennial kingdom began at the first coming of Christ and will continue until His second coming.

- Amillennialists, therefore, **deny the rapture**, believing that there will only be a second coming of Christ to usher all of God's people into heaven and to judge all of the ungodly.
- Amillennialists **deny there will be a Great Tribulation** period, believing that all passages referring to a **Great tribulation** period or to a coming **wrath** are *the trials and suffering of the church on earth*. Remember they tend to spiritualize prophetic passages.
- Amillennialists believe that **Satan was bound** at the first coming of Christ and that Christ is now ruling in heaven on the throne of David (cf. Revelation 20).
- In regards to the two resurrections found in Revelation 20:4-6, amillennialists believe the first to be a spiritual resurrection that takes place at the new birth and the second to be a **physical resurrection that takes place at the end of the spiritual millennium**.

The primary problem with the view of amillennialism is that it is **rooted in this allegorical method of interpretation**. Many amillennialists will interpret Scripture literally until they come to prophetic passages, where they will adopt an allegorical method of interpretation. It essentially calls into question God's attributes.

“When convenient, Israel does not mean Israel Jerusalem does not mean Jerusalem; the throne of David does not mean the throne of David; Christ's future 1,000 year rule of earth becomes His present rule in the heart's of men; the 1,000-year Kingdome Age becomes a hodgepodge of conflicting interpretations.” – *Marvin Rosenthal*

“It is interesting that when a text condemns Israel it is interpreted literally. ... But when God says that Israel is the *'apple of His eye'* (or any other praise or promise), somehow that becomes the Church.” – *Marvin Rosenthal*

**Rosenthal** says, “*Amillennialism has its fountainhead in Roman theology, which is irrefutably anti-Semitic. By the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, emerging Roman theology to distance itself from all Jewish culture and custom when interpreting the Word of God.*”

Many A-millennial theologians have acknowledged that if they took a literal interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies and of Revelation 20, they would conclude that there would indeed be an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures.

- First, they understand the **binding of Satan** in Revelation 20:1-3 as taking place at the first coming of Christ, which they view as the beginning of the millennium. This does not square with the Scripture, which emphasizes Satan's present authority over the earth (1 John 5:19). Nor does it take into consideration the chronological consistency of the book of Revelation.
- Second, they **ignore** the emphatic nature of the phrase, “**a thousand years**,” used six times in Revelation 20:1-6 and understand it figuratively. This does not agree with the book of Revelation's consistent, definite and literal use of time.

While there is some use of symbolism in the book of Revelation, a great majority of the numbers and time references used in the book are quite literal.

- Third, they **misunderstand the two resurrections** found in Revelation 20:4-6. According to the Apostle John in the passage, *the first resurrection mentioned occurs before the millennium begins*, while the **second resurrection takes place after it is over**. Once again a normal reading of the text would indicate that both of these resurrections are literal, physical resurrections. In addition, those who participate in the first resurrection were beheaded because of their identification with Christ. They were already regenerated before they were put to death, therefore this resurrection cannot refer to a spiritual resurrection at the new birth, as amillennialists would view it.

Sequence of events:

1. Worsening conditions in the world
2. Second Coming of Christ
3. General Resurrection and general judgment
4. Eternity

There are four Amillennial points of view:

1. *Liberals* believe in fulfillment in the 2nd century BC in the Maccabean time under **Antiochus Epiphanes** (*However, he never established a 7 year covenant and Jesus saw it as a future event*)
2. *Jewish scholars* find fulfillment in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans
3. *Conservatives* believe the 2nd half of the 70th week is indefinite period of time
4. *Others* believe that the 70th week is the life of Christ, the middle is the crucifixion, no fulfillment of last half



In the postmillennialist view the millennium is seen as an indefinitely long time thus precluding literal interpretation of a thousand-year period. According to Loraine Boettner "*the world will be Christianized, and the return of Christ will occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace, commonly called the millennium.*"

Postmillennialists commonly view the rapture of the Church as one and the same event as the second coming of Christ. According to them the great tribulation was already fulfilled in the Jewish-Roman War of 66–73 AD that involved the destruction of Jerusalem. Authors who have expressed support for this view include the Puritan author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, John *Bunyan*, and *Jonathan Edwards* and *Charles Finney*.

## Background

- **Optimistic** Post-Millennialism
- Often called: postmillenarianism
- The Gospel will ultimately be successful and the majority of the world will be converted to usher in the Kingdom of God, a "golden age."
- The millennium is a period of 1,000 years (Although some would view this number as symbolic) in which the Church is triumphant in the world. A "golden age" ushered in by the church,
- Christ will return after this millennium, and usher in the eternal state.
- Because of the steady advance of Christianity, the societal structures will continue get better and better.
- The Church has replaced Israel as the chosen people of God (Although, many postmillennialists teach that there will be a national or racial conversion of Israel).
- Recent Origin by **Daniel Whitby a Unitarian** minister in the 17th century
- It is an interpretation Revelation 20 which **sees Christ's second coming as occurring after (Latin post-) the "Millennium"**, a Golden Age in which Christian ethics prosper. (Think Dominion Theology)
- The term subsumes several similar views of the end times, and it stands in contrast to premillennialism and, to a lesser extent, amillennialism.
- Postmillennialism was a dominant theological belief among American Protestants who promoted **reform movements** in the 1850's **abolitionism** and the current

**Social Gospel.** Postmillennialism has become one of the key tenets of a movement known as **Christian Reconstructionism**.

"The belief that a religious revival and the resulting improvement in human faith and morals would eventually usher in a thousand years of peace and justice antecedent to the Second Coming of Christ was an impetus to the promotion of Progressive reforms, as historians have frequently pointed out." - *George M. Fredrickson*

- They were sure that W.W.I was the "*war to end all wars*", peace would follow.
- W.W.II dashed their hopes, and the view rapidly waned
- The postmillennial outlook was articulated by men like John Owen in the 17th century, **Jonathan Edwards** in the 18th century, and Charles Hodge in the 19th century.
- Postmillennialism was widely held among the **Puritans**. It was also the dominant view among **Reformed theologians** of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- Recently there is a resurgence, however - *New Post-Millennialism* holds that Kingdom already exists in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and is coexisting with the Present Age - and is aligned with *Theonomy*, the view that we should continue to practice Mosaic law

## Description

- Postmillennialism teaches that the "thousand years" of Revelation 20 occur prior to the second coming of Christ. Until recently, most postmillennialists taught that the millennium would be the **last thousand years of the present age**. Today, many postmillennialists teach that the millennial age is the entire period of **time between Christ's first and second advents**.
- Postmillennialism is that view of the last things which holds that the kingdom of God is now being extended in the world through the preaching of the gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, that **the world eventually is to be Christianized** and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the millennium.
- Postmillennialism teaches that in the present age, the Holy Spirit will draw unprecedented multitudes to Christ through the faithful preaching of the gospel.
- They also point to the messianic Psalms, especially Psalm 2, particularly verses 7-9, "... *I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.*"
- Believed that as the gospel was spread the world would become better and better, the world will be christianized before Christ returns - good will triumph over evil (Think Dominion Theology)
- Postmillennialism expects that eventually the vast majority of people living will be saved.
- Men would bring the kingdom through their purified hearts - similarly to Amillennialism

- Then when everything was right and society had been Christianized, after 1000 years - give or take a 1000, Jesus would return
- Righteousness, peace, and prosperity will prevail in the affairs of men and of nations. After an extensive era of such conditions Jesus Christ will return visibly, bodily, and gloriously, to end history with the general resurrection and the final judgment after which the eternal order follows.
- This belief that good will gradually triumph over evil has led proponents of postmillennialism to label themselves "**optimillennialists**" in contrast to "**pessimillennial**" premillennialists and amillennialists.
- Many postmillennialists also adopt some form of *preterism*, which holds that many of the end time **prophecies in the Bible have already been fulfilled**.
- At the end of the present age, Christ will return, there will be a general resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the final judgment will take place.

## The Millennium

- Millennium is not literal and no seven-year tribulation (70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel) – An **allegorical, non-literal** interpretation
- *Eternity* begins after Christ returns.
- Although some postmillennialists hold to a literal millennium of 1,000 years, other postmillennialists see the **thousand years more as a figurative term for a long period of time** (similar in that respect to amillennialism).
- Among those holding to a non-literal "millennium" it is usually understood to have **already begun**, which implies a less obvious and less dramatic kind of millennium than that typically envisioned by premillennialists, as well as a more unexpected return of Christ.

## Variants

- *Revivalist postmillennialism* is a form of the doctrine held by the **Puritans** and some today that teaches that the millennium will come about not from Christians changing society from the top down (that is, through its political and legal institutions) but from the bottom up at the grass roots level (that is, through changing people's hearts and minds).
- *Reconstructionist postmillennialism*, on the other hand, sees that along with grass roots preaching of the Gospel and explicitly Christian education, Christians should also set about changing society's legal and political institutions in accordance with Biblical ethics.
- Those versions of **postmillennialism** that recognize the millennium to be symbolic of the entire present age **differ in only a few respects from amillennialism**.
- In a strictly chronological sense, the amillennialists and the postmillennialists agree that Christ returns after the millennium. In fact, **amillennialists were known as postmillennialists until the twentieth century**.

- The two agree the millennium is figurative, not a literal one thousand year period, and that it “is a time in which the gospel is preached throughout the world” as Satan is currently bound.

## Summary

Most postmillennialists **believe that God will work through the church to bring about the millennium on earth** by fulfilling the Great Commission. At the end of the millennium, Christ will return, followed by a general resurrection of the dead and a general judgment. There are three different groups of postmillennialists, but the basic elements of postmillennialism remain the same:

- As the name “postmillennial” indicates, this view teaches that **the return of Christ follows the period of the millennium.**
- Postmillennialists believe that the “**thousand years**” of Revelation 20 should not be taken in a literal way, but represents **a long period of time.** Thus they see the length of the Millennium as not necessarily 1,000 years, but probably a much longer time period. It will be a **time of peace where Christian principles will dominate the earth** and sin will be greatly reduced.
- Postmillennialists do not view the millennium as a literal earthly reign of Christ, rather it is considered to be **spiritual as Christ rules in the hearts of believers.**
- Postmillennialists possess an **optimistic view of this present age.** They believe that the world will be continually improving. Certain examples are cited: social conditions are improving (i.e. for women); money given to the church is growing; the Bible is the best-selling book in the world; and the gospel is spreading out further than ever.
- Postmillennialists view Revelation 20 in a similar way as do amillennialists: They **see the binding of Satan as having already taken place;** they view the thousand years figuratively rather than literally and they see the first resurrection of Revelation 20 as a spiritual resurrection and the second as a physical resurrection.
- Postmillennialism agrees with premillennialism as far as the chronology of Revelation 19 and 20, however **they see the rider on a white horse in Revelation 19 as a picture of Christ being victorious over His enemies through the preaching of the gospel** in the present age rather than a literal second coming of Christ to the earth.
- Postmillennialism also endorses **an allegorical interpretation for some Scripture passages as do amillennialism.**

Unfortunately, many of the same comments about amillennialism can be made here about postmillennialism. Like amillennialism, postmillennialism adheres to a figurative method of interpretation rather than a literal one. This once again results in the same interpretative problems for Revelation 20 as with amillennialism.

- First, they understand the **binding of Satan** in Revelation 20:1-3 as taking place at the first coming of Christ. As mentioned earlier, this does not agree with the Scripture, which emphasizes Satan's present authority over the earth (1 John 5:19). And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. (See Amillennial discussion on Satan)
- Second, **they ignore the emphatic nature of the phrase, “a thousand years,”** used six times in Revelation 20:1-6 and understand it figuratively. This does not agree with the book of Revelation's consistent, definite and literal use of time. While there is some use of symbolism in the book of Revelation, a great majority of the numbers and time references used in the book are quite literal. If the literal sense makes plain sense, then we should seek no other sense.
- Third, they **misunderstand the two resurrections** found in Revelation 20:4-6. According to the Apostle John in the passage, the *first resurrection* mentioned occurs before the millennium begins, while the *second resurrection* takes place after it is over. Once again a normal reading of the text would indicate that both of these resurrections are literal, physical resurrections. In addition, those who participate in the first resurrection were beheaded because of their identification with Christ. They were already regenerated before they were put to death, therefore this resurrection cannot refer to a spiritual resurrection at the new birth, as the postmillennialists or amillennialists would view it.

Although postmillennialism has the same problems as amillennialism, there are other issues that must be overcome.

- First, there is a **failure** of most postmillennialists **to see Israel and the church as distinct**. The Law of Moses was given to the nation of Israel, not to the church (2 Corinthians 3:1-11; Romans 7:1-6, 10:4). The Old Testament promises made to Israel are for Israel, not for the church.
- Second, the **close of this present age will be marked by apostasy, not by the triumphal success of the gospel and a golden age of success by mankind** (cf. Matthew 24:4-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:3ff; 2 Timothy 3:1-5). Nor does it seem in line with reality that the world is consistently improving. In fact, it appears to be consistently deteriorating and growing increasingly wicked. Postmillennialism must be rejected as an acceptable eschatological view based off its **lack of consistency with the Scripture**. If one evaluates the Scripture with a consistent method of interpretation, it would not lead to the postmillennial view.

This position attribute to the Church a purpose God never intended – that man, who cannot even unite the Church, will bring in the Kingdom of God. Thus, big problems remain:

1. The 1900 years of church history argue directly against this position,
2. Lack of evidence that the spread of the gospel is purifying the world, and
3. The Bible doesn't describe the last days as a revival:

2 Timothy 3:1 But mark this: **There will be terrible times in the last days.** 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, 4 treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

## Preterism

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The Preterist view, made popular by a Catholic Jesuit priest Luis de Alcasar during the Counter-Reformation, holds that everything prophesied in Revelation has already taken place. Within Post-millennial views is a group who holds that eschatological prophecy has been partially (partial preterism) or completely fulfilled (full preterism).

**Note:** The **Jesuit** order zealously opposed the Reformation. The main goal of the Jesuits was and is to educate people around the world about Catholicism, stop the spread of Protestantism - the Counter-Reformation.

This school of thought interprets the Book of Daniel as referring to events that happened from the 7th century BC until the first century AD. They hold that the prophecies of the Book of Revelation are events that happened in the first century AD.

The term preterism comes from the Latin *praeter*, which is a prefix denoting that something is "past." Adherents of preterism are known as preterists. Preterism teaches that either all (full preterism) or a majority (partial preterism) of the Olivet discourse had come to pass by AD 70.

**Partial Preterism** (orthodox preterism or classical preterism), the older of the two views, holds that most eschatological prophecies, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord, were fulfilled either in AD 70 when Titus sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish Temple, putting a permanent stop to the daily animal sacrifices, or during the persecution of Christians under the Emperor Nero.

It identifies "Babylon the great" (Revelation 17-18) with the ancient pagan City of Rome or Jerusalem. Most Partial Preterists also believe the term Last Days refers not to the last days of planet Earth or the last days of humankind, but rather to the last days of the Mosaic covenant which God had exclusively with national Israel until the year AD 70.

Partial Preterists believe that the new creation comes in redemptive progression as Christ reigns from His heavenly throne, subjugating His enemies, and will eventually culminate in the destruction of physical death, the "last enemy" (1 Cor 15:20-24). If there are any enemies remaining, the resurrection event cannot have occurred.

**Full Preterism** differs from partial preterism in that full preterists believe that the destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled all eschatological or "end times" events, including the

resurrection of the dead and Jesus' Second Coming, or Parousia, and the Final Judgment.

Full Preterism holds that Jesus' Second Coming is to be viewed not as a future-to-us bodily return, but rather a "return" manifested by the physical destruction of Jerusalem and her Temple in AD 70 by foreign armies in a manner similar to various Old Testament descriptions of God coming to destroy other nations in righteous judgment. Full Preterism also holds that the Resurrection of the dead did not entail the raising of the physical body, but rather the resurrection of the soul from the "place of the dead," known as Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek).

It is often called "*the AD 70 doctrine*" as their whole eschatology is hinged on this one event. Nearly all Partial Preterists hold to amillennialism or postmillennialism. Preterist wrongly believe that the other positions on the timing of Christ's Second Coming speak of God's judgment on Israel.

Proponents include: *American Vision*, Gary DeMar; *Ligonier Ministries*, R.C. Sproul.

**Counterpoint:** The re-gathering of Israel in these last days has manifest the fulfilled prophecies that point to the end times. And that had not happened in AD 70; that was the dispersion, the Diaspora that we still talk about today. So, the idea is that all of the prophecies that you read about in the Bible were fulfilled when the Temple fell in 70 AD.

Preterism is tied to what an early church father, his name was Papias or Papias said that the Apostle John was martyred in 70 AD. Yet, the book of Revelation was actually written in 96 after the Temple fell. Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius and others affirm that John was on the Island of Patmos in 95-96 AD, and that is when he wrote the book of Revelation – well past 70 AD, as future events.

So, the prophecies that John gave are after the Second Temple fell. Therefore, what he was prophesying is not the fall of the Second Temple, he is prophesying a rebuilding of the Third Temple which the Antichrist will desecrate in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. The great multitude of signs pointing to the end times, the Day of the Lord, we are looking forward to and they are beginning to be manifest in our day.



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## Jesus' Second Coming

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### Appendix

#### Other Related Topics

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

“Paradise lost in Genesis become paradise gained in Revelation”  
– Norman Geisler

## Future Devine Judgment(s)

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Revelation 11:15 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.

Judgment of God is a topic that gets confused in scripture. In fact, it takes some effort to rightly divide scripture on this subject. I hear Christians routinely confusing this topic by quoting verses, or describing events, that are not related.

There are various Judgments mentioned in scripture. However, there are at least two distinct future judgments of mankind: **Sheep & Goat Judgment**, and the **Great White Throne Judgment**.

There is a possible third judgment, known as the **Bema-seat Judgment**. However, this judgment may be one in the same event as the Great White Throne Judgment.

Regardless, we all have a divine appointment with our Creator.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the judgment**:

John 12:31 **Now is the judgment of this world**: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (At the Baptism of John)

John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath **committed all judgment unto the Son**: 23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

John 9:39 And **Jesus** said, **For judgment I am come into this world**, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

Acts 17:31 Because **he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world** in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: **as I hear, I judge**: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 8:15 Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, **my judgment is true**: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons**:

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap**.

Romans 2:2 But we are sure that the **judgment of God is according to truth** against them which commit such things. ... 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart **treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God**; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, **until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts**: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Revelation 19:11 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.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, That **every idle word** that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof **in the day of judgment**

Once thing we can rest assured of, is that Jesus will judge rightly and righteously.

“The Son of God will transform a world full of injustice into a place of peace and safety. No more will the guilty go free; no more will the innocent suffer: *‘He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun’* (Psalm 37:6).” – Randy Alcorn

## Sheep & Goat Judgment - Judgment of Nations



At the end of Seventieth Week of Daniel Jesus judges the nations, in what is referred to as the **Sheep and Goat Judgment**. This judgment is to determine who will enter the millennial kingdom in their mortal bodies. He is judging those who have now survived the Great Tribulation, the Wrath of God, and the Battle of Armageddon. These survivors enter into the Millennium in their mortal bodies to repopulate the earth for one thousand years.

Those who rejected Christ and took the mark of the beast during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel *'will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life'* (Matthew 25:46).

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the **throne** of his glory: 32 And before him shall be **gathered all nations**: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ... 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. ... 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Mark 6:11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be **more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.**

### Church & Israel

The foundation for global conflict lies in God's promise to Abraham:

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless

thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3)

The **son of promise** (*Isaac*) and the **son of the bondwoman** (*Ishmael*) are at the crux of the issue (Galatians 4:22-31). In eternity’s eyes, all the petty politics and power plays of the nations are “*dust of the balance*” (Isaiah 40:15).

Anyone familiar with biblical history will know that God dealt with the nations of the world as tools of influence, reward, and punishment to Israel. After Abraham generated the beginnings of Israel’s enemies through *Ishmael*, and Jacob began another line of enmity through *Esau*, the stories of the Canaanite conquest under Joshua and the subsequent 400 years of the time of the Judges relate the conflicts that culminated in the united kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon.

Nearly half of the remaining Old Testament records the efforts by God to deal with Israel and Judah after the civil war begun by Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. That concluded with the Assyrian captivity and disbursement of the northern 10 tribes and the 70-year captivity of Judah under Babylon.

The nearly two millennia from Abraham to the coming of the Messiah have been followed by two millennia of a spiritual “*déjà vu*” through the Church the Lord Jesus started at Pentecost. God’s promise is that both Israel and the Church will find satisfaction and success when He returns to finalize and fulfill the promise made to Abraham so long ago. (*HMM*) The *good news* is:

Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Those in Christ are a distinct entity. Saved Jew and Gentile will together as one Church, the Bride of Christ, be raptured prior to the Wrath of God. Those remaining on earth, both Jew and Gentile, who survive the Judgment, each face a distinct dispensation. For the Jew, the Nation of Israel, they will look forward to Atonement; for the Gentile Nations, judgment.

### **Feast of Day of Atonement**

This particular feast of the Seven Feasts of the Lord, points to the future atonement of the *Nation of Israel*. It has special significance regarding the Judgment of Nations.

For the **Christian**, our Atonement was completed in Christ’s **First Coming**, His passion; represented in the first three Spring Feasts. [*See: Feasts of the Lord*]

By **contrast**, this feast points to **Christ’s future work with the nation of Israel – Israel’s Day of Atonement**

Hosea 5:15 I will go and return to my place, **till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction** they will seek me early.

Day of Atonement points to when the **Jewish remnant will look upon the One they pierced**, repent of their sins, and receive Him as their Messiah. ...

Zechariah 12:10 ... **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced**, and they shall **mourn** for him ....

Romans 11:1 I say then, **Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.** For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 **God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.** ...

At Jesus physical return to earth, many **Jews who survive the Wrath of God** (defined inside the Scroll of Revelation), **will be saved.** It seems ...

Zechariah 12:9 And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that **I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.** 10 **And I will pour upon the house of David**, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the **spirit of grace** and of supplications: and **they shall look upon me** whom they have pierced, **and they shall mourn** for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that **blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** 26 And so **all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall **turn away ungodliness from Jacob:**

This refers to not all Jews throughout the ages, but rather **those who are alive and survive the Great Tribulation** (the wrath of Satan) and the **Wrath of God** (in the scroll)

Israel's Day of Atonement required the shedding of blood. However, in 70 AD when the Temple was destroyed, the sacrificial system ended. **These are they who have not accepted Jesus' once-and-for-all sacrifice for their sin.**

Many **from the Nations** of the world will not take the **Mark of the Beast** (Rev 13:16). When Jesus returns, of **those who survive**, many will repent of their sin before the Book of Life is forever closed.

Matthew 25:31 When the **Son of man shall come in his glory**, and all the holy angels with him, then shall **he sit upon the throne of his glory:** 32 And before him shall be **gathered all nations:** and **he shall separate them one from another**, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on

the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, **Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:** ... 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

This **multitude** from among the **Nations (Gentiles)**, along with the **Sons of Jacob (Jews)**, will enter the Millennial **Messianic Kingdom in their mortal bodies**. Those who make the cut, enter the millennial kingdom to repopulate the world.

The final Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles will continue into the Messianic Kingdom – Christ will then Tabernacle with man forever. It is celebrated annually. The other Feasts, which are each prophecy, have at this time been fulfilled. [See: *Feasts of the Lord*]

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, **that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem** shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to **keep the feast of tabernacles**. 17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. 18 And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the **feast of tabernacles**. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the **feast of tabernacles**.

This is in distinction from the raptured and glorified Church (Jew and Gentile saved by grace) who will inhabit Jerusalem.

“For I will **take you from among the heathen**, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I **sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean**: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I **cleanse you**. A **new heart also will I give you**, and a **new spirit** will I put within you: and I will **take away the stony heart** out of your flesh, and I will give you an **heart of flesh**. And I will **put my spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:24-27)

Ezekiel prophesied God’s unilateral promise to redeem repenting Israel (Ezekiel 18:30-32), but only after they embraced their Messiah in faith, turning from their sin to serve the living God (Jeremiah 31:31). In the book of Ezekiel, the phrase “they will know I am Yahweh” is repeated **35 times** to refer to punishment.

But beginning with chapter 34, Ezekiel’s tone turns from severe judgment to unilateral new covenant blessings. “They will know I am Yahweh” is

repeated **six times** to denote Yahweh's blessing of steadfast love (Ezekiel 34:27-30; 36:11, 38; 38:23; 39:6, 28). But don't miss Yahweh's reason for this deliverance—that His children would now walk in His statutes and follow His rules (36:27). What a privilege and wonder that Yahweh states to His children, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:28). – *ICR, CCM*

## Bema-seat Judgment – Judgment at the Seat of Christ



Christians will receive degrees of reward for their works or service to God.

“Believers will also be judged by Christ, but since Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to us and our names are written in the book of life, we will be rewarded, but not punished, according to our deeds.

The judgment seat of Christ does not determine salvation; that was determined by Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf. We should not look at the judgment seat of Christ as God judging our sins, but rather as God rewarding us for our lives.

Yes, as the Bible says, we will have to give an account of ourselves. Part of this is surely answering for the sins we committed. However, that is not going to be the primary focus of the judgment seat of Christ.

Some of the things we might be judged on are how well we obeyed the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), how victorious we were over sin (Romans 6:1-4), and how well we controlled our tongues (James 3:1-9). The various crowns (Righteousness, Life, Glory) are described in 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, and Revelation 2:10.” – *Randy Alcorn*

These references to judgment could be regarding the same event as the Great White Throne Judgment.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were **sealed with that holy Spirit of promise**, 14 Which is the **earnest of our inheritance until the redemption** of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the **crown of life**, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must **all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then **every one of us shall give account of himself to God**.

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 **Every man's work shall be made manifest**: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 **If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire**.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but **one receiveth the prize**? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible **crown**; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

2 Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore **endure hardness**, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. 5 And if a man also strive for masteries, **yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully**.

## Great White Throne Judgment



At the end of the Millennium, Satan is released for a season to test the nations. The final judgment of unbelievers (both the dead and the living at the time) will take place in the Great White Throne Judgment. These are judged according to their works, where many will be sentenced to everlasting punishment in the lake of fire.

“This judgment has nothing to do with their eternal destiny—at that point, unbelievers have already sealed their fate by rejecting Jesus. The Great White Throne Judgment determines the severity of unbelievers’ punishment based on what they did in life.” – *Randy Alcorn*

Satan is bound for a thousand years, and then released for a season to test the hearts of those who are in their mortal bodies living in the millennial earth.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and **Satan, and bound him a thousand years**, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season**. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the **souls of them** that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and **which had not worshipped the beast**, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and **reigned with Christ a thousand years**. 5 But ***the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished***. This is the first resurrection.

At the end of human history, after the testing, and prior to the beginning of the eternal state, there is the Great White Throne judgment. At God’s throne of judgment, when “the dead [are] judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works,” then “whosoever [is] not found written in the book of life [is] cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:12, 15).

Revelation 20:10 And the **devil** that deceived them was **cast into the lake of fire** and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a **great**

**white throne**, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the **dead, small and great**, stand before God; and **the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books**, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and **death and hell delivered up the dead** which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And **death and hell were cast into the lake of fire**. This is the second death. 15 And **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**.

And then eternity in New Heaven and New Earth for the faithful believers:

Revelation 21:1 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. 2 And I John saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

## Heaven & Hell - By Any Other Name



“Hell is empty and all the devils are here.” - *William Shakespeare*

The traditional, biblical understanding of hell consists of three parts: eternal, conscious, and punishment. The duration of hell is eternal. Because people are made to last forever, they will either live eternally in heaven or eternally in hell. The prophet Daniel wrote about the eternal nature of heaven and hell when he said, “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*” (Daniel 12:2).

“Don’t worry about dying; you will live forever. All you have to worry about is location, location, location.”

The experience of hell is conscious. People in hell are not asleep or annihilated; instead, people are awake and aware of their experience. Jesus said, “*While the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Matthew 8:12).

Hell is also a just punishment for sins. Hell is not an unearned sentence but a lawful condemnation of sinners who deserve the penalty they receive. Jude explained the penal nature of hell when he wrote, “*Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire*” (Jude 1:7).

Related strongly to judgment, are the concept of Hell and Heaven; Hades and Abraham’s Bosom.

"From what we can gather from Scripture, Hell was created for the rebellion of Satan and the angels that followed him (Matthew 25:41; Romans 6:23). Scriptures indicate God never intended Hell and the lake of fire for mankind but that is where all will go who choose not to put their faith in Jesus Christ. The most important question is not where hell is or even when it was created but how to avoid going to hell. We avoid hell when we choose to believe in Jesus Christ—the One who died to pay for your sins and all who choose to put their trust in Him.

Hell began because God is completely righteous and morally perfect. His ways are above our ways (Psalm 18:30). In God, there is absolutely no imperfection, no blemish (1 John 1:5), and God Himself is the standard of what is good, right, and moral. Because of this and because of His righteousness, all fall short of the glory of God. Not one person alive aside from Jesus Christ has or will live up to His standards. This is why Jesus came—He came to die in our place so that we would never be separated from God (Romans 3:23, 5:25). When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden at the instigation of Satan (Genesis 3), all of mankind was plunged into a state of spiritual death. Even though Adam and Eve were physically alive, they were dead with respect to the Holy God for whom they were created to be in relationship—all because they chose to eat from the tree of life." – *Crosswalk, Heather Riggelman*

## Understanding Hell

What is Hell? This is a rather difficult concept from scripture. Some aspects are vague. The terminology can be confusing. It is like understanding the difference between the *original perfect heavens and earth, the fallen cursed heavens and earth, the millennial heavens and earth, and the final new heavens and earth*. These can be easily confused and conflated in scripture. The nuanced distinction is important for clear understanding.

The Bible uses all sorts of images when attempting to describe hell. Hell is never pictured in just one way. Hell is pictured as a “*lake of fire*” (Revelation 20:14), a place of *eternal torment* (Luke 16:23), or a place of punishment for sin (Matthew 13:42). These images are vivid and frightening. Scripture uses these word pictures to describe a spiritual reality that is devoid of all life.

Although Hell is pictured as a “*place*”, this place is understood as the antithesis of eternal life. Here Jesus warns people to fear “*the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell*” (Matthew 10:28). Hell equates to destruction. Here Jesus warns people to fear “*the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell*” (Matthew 10:28).

To grasp what Hell is, a distinction and definition must be made for: **Sheol, Hades, Abraham’s Bosom, Gehenna, Hell, Lake of fire, Paradise, Heaven, and Third Heaven.** (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/he-descended-into-hell>) ... also, *everlasting contempt, everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, everlasting destruction*

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into **hell**, into the **fire that never shall be quenched**: 44 Where their **worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.** (*Repeated three times in succession*)

### Old Testament:

- “Hell refers to a grave, abode of the dead, inferos – inferior world, underworld (*Dr. Youssef*).
- **Greeks**-Hades, **Jews**-Sheol. In the New Testament, the Hebrew word Sheol is translated as Hades
- **Sheol** (or **Hades Greek**) - When a human being died prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, the soul was abandoned “to **Sheol**,” and the body saw corruption or decayed. The great pit in the center of the earth confining the souls of the dead—the place called Hades.
- **Sheol** (or **Hades Greek**) - In the Old Testament, **Sheol** is the **place of the souls of the dead**, both the righteous (like Jacob, Genesis 37:35, and Samuel, 1 Samuel 28:13–14) and the wicked (Psalm 31:17).
- **Sheol** - has two compartments: “**Hades**” proper (where the rich man is sent, Luke 16:23), “a place of sorrows,” and “**Abraham’s bosom**” (where the angels carry Lazarus, Luke 16:22).
- The righteous who died **prior to Christ** dwelt in Sheol with Abraham.
  - **Hades** - proper is a place of torment, where fire causes anguish to the souls imprisoned there.
  - **Abraham’s bosom** - while within shouting distance of **Hades**, is separated from it by “a great chasm” (Luke 16:26) and is, like the Greek Elysium, a **place of comfort and rest**.

## New Testament:

One of Christ's purposes on Earth was *"to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"* (Isaiah 61:1). That is exactly what He did when He died on the cross for the sins of these very captives, then, in the Spirit, descended into Hades to set them free.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)

He returned with the very *"keys of hell and of death"* (Revelation 1:18), alive forevermore. The souls of those who had died in faith came with Him, finally ascending with Him into "paradise," in "the third heaven" (note: Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4) to wait with Him for His future return to reclaim the whole earth.

- Following his death for sin, then, Jesus journeys to **Sheol/Hades**, to the City of Death, and rips its gates off the hinges. He liberates Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, John the Baptist, and the rest of the Old Testament faithful, ransoming them from the power of **Sheol** (Psalm 49:15; 86:13; 89:48).
- In speaking about hell, Jesus often uses the word **Gehenna**. Over time, this word came to be associated with torment, misery, and weeping. Thus, we translate this word as *"hell."* (But, is it?) In the first century world, however, Gehenna referred to a valley outside Jerusalem. This valley was used to burn the bodies of animals, criminals, and other forms of refuse. Importantly, the fires of Gehenna never went out. The reason this valley was chosen to be a place of burning was because, at one point in Israel's history, the wicked in Jerusalem used this place to sacrifice children to the god Molech. Jeremiah refers to this, noting the specific location this idolatrous practice took place. He cries out: "The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the Lord.... They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire, something I did not command" (Jeremiah 7:30-31). The Valley of Ben Hinnom – later recognized as Gehenna – came to be understood as a place of wickedness. Due to this association, this valley was unusable to Israel, and thus it became the place to burn away all that was unclean. The bodies of the wicked, along with other refuse, were thrown into the valley to be consumed by fire. Therefore, going to Gehenna (i.e., being burned with the garbage) was deemed the last act of judgment upon the wicked.
- Both **Paradise** and **Torments** lie on different sides of a place called **Hades**. ... After Jesus died, and then beat death by rising from the dead, our Savior took all those good and faithful people in Paradise out of Hades and right up to Heaven, leaving all the evil people still behind in that prison called Torments. Now, whenever a person dies who has refused Jesus'

salvation, their spirits travel to that awful place called Torments, awaiting their court date and final sentence for their crimes. ... Luke 16

- **Heaven** (or **Paradise**) - After his resurrection, Jesus ascends to **heaven** and brings the ransomed dead with him, so that now **paradise** is no longer down near the **place of torment**, but is up in the **third heaven**, the highest heaven, where God dwells (2 Corinthians 12:2–4). [*While His body slept in the tomb, His spirit descended into Hades where the spirits of all who had died in faith were awaiting Him, and “when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and . . . ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:8, 10).*-ICR]
- Now when the righteous die, they aren't merely carried by angels to **Abraham's bosom**; they depart to be with Christ, which is far better (Philippians 1:23).
- The wicked, however, remain in **Hades** in torment, until the **final judgment**, The **Great White Throne Judgment**, when Hades gives up the dead who dwell there, and they are judged according to their deeds, and then Death and Hades are thrown into **hell**, into the **lake of fire** (Revelation 20:13–15).
- After those **thousand years** are over, God will then sit upon His **great white throne** and hold one **final judgment**. He will gather all the evil people who were sent to **Torments**, judge them for their rebellion against Him and other terrible crimes, and then throw the whole evil lot of them, along with **Satan and Hades** itself, into a **burning lake of fire**. The faithful citizens of Heaven will then move into a wondrous city called the **New Jerusalem** which will stand mightily on a brand **New Earth**.

**Appolyon** - the *angel of the bottomless* pit. Rev. 9:11. Apollyon (Ἀπολλυων) is the Greek name for Abaddon, the spiritual being (or place) named as *the destroyer* (or place of destruction) in Christian apocalyptic theology. The Hebrew term **Abaddon** (meaning "destruction", "doom"), and its Greek equivalent **Apollyon** (meaning "Destroyer") appear in the Bible as both a place of destruction and an archangel of the abyss. In the Hebrew Bible, **abaddon** is used with reference to a **bottomless pit**, often appearing alongside the place **Sheol**, meaning the realm of the dead. In the Book of Revelation of the New Testament, an angel called Abaddon is described as the king of an army of locusts; his name is first transcribed in Koine Greek (Revelation 9:11—"whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon,") translated Apollyon.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and **preached unto the spirits in prison.**” (1 Peter 3:18-19)

This strongly suggests that these were evil spirits to whom Christ was (literally) “proclaiming” the victory He had won over Satan when He had “once suffered for sins” on the cross (the same word is translated “proclaimed” in Luke 12:3—“proclaimed upon the housetops”).

These fallen angels had tried to corrupt all flesh “in the days of Noah” (1 Peter 3:20; see Genesis 6:1-4, 12), and therefore had been cast “down to hell” and “**delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment**” (2 Peter 2:4).

But as Peter had preached on the day of Pentecost: “His soul was not left in hell . . . . This Jesus hath God raised up” and “hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:31-32, 36). Thus, He is now our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom someday soon “every knee should bow ... in heaven, and . . . in earth, and . . . under the earth” (Philippians 2:10). - *HMM*

Thus, let's define the key terms:

- **Abraham's Bosom** - The righteous that died *prior to Christ* atonement dwelt in this area of Sheol/Hades with Abraham.
- **Sheol** – Jewish for Hades: made up of Hades/Sheol proper and Abraham's Bosom; and intermediate Old Testament place of waiting
- **Hades** – Greek for Sheol: made up of Hades/Sheol proper and Abraham's Bosom; and intermediate Old Testament place of waiting. Hades is the abode of departed spirits. The wicked, remain in Hades in torment (or **Torments**), until the final judgment. It apparently has flames of torment “*Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*” (Luke 16:24)
- **Gehenna** – Rendered "hell," often meant Hades as such, rather than the final state of the lost (which Jesus called Gehenna), as it always is today – hell, lake of fire. Gehenna is a valley west and South of Jerusalem, also a symbolic name for the final place of punishment of the ungodly.
- **Hell** – Eternal Fire. Eternal Punishment. Second Death. Final eternal state of judgment; eternal torment. The *Lake of Fire*.
- **Eternal Fire** - In addition to naming Hell, Jesus also describes Hell in other ways. For instance, Matthew recounts Jesus' words on hell when he wrote (emphasis added), “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the *eternal fire* prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Matthew 25:41).
- **Eternal Punishment** - In the same passage, Matthew records Jesus' words about retributive justice when he spoke of the heartlessness of some professed believers as he condemned them (emphasis added), “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:46). It would be a reference to Hell.
- **Lake of Fire** – Appears to be the same as Hell. Where Death and Hades, Satan and his demons, will be sent for eternity. Also, the Second Death. “But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). Ultimately, “Death

and Hades [will be] thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14).

- **Paradise** – Apparently, refers to Heaven – the third heaven.
- **Heaven** - The third heaven equivalent to Paradise.
- **Third Heaven** – Where Jesus resides with God the Father now. Where the dead in Christ exist until Christ Returns.

## Did Jesus descend into Hell?

Did Jesus go to hell after the cross? Oddly, it would seem so; or, rather *Hades*, that is; not to *hell* proper.

“Reading the current English translations of Scripture it is easy to understand why some say yes. The question often arises from the King James translation of Acts 2:27-31 (a quote from Psalm 16:8-11), that the soul of Jesus ‘*was left in hell.*’ In the Apostles Creed it is said Jesus ‘*descended into hell*’ (descendit ad inferna). ‘*Hell*’ in both cases refers not to the hell of eternal punishment (Gehenna), but to the realm of the dead, the underworld (*OT Sheol, NT Hades*). Hence modern translations both the NT and the Creed read ‘*Hades,*’ ‘*dead,*’ not hell.” – *Nelson Price*

1 Peter 3:19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

The first mention of Jesus descending to “Hell” was found in a later form of the **Apostles’ Creed**, which is considered the Christian church’s oldest creed of the basic doctrines regarding the Christian faith, dating as far back as **AD 140**.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. **He descended into hell**; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to

judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen.”

The Apostle’s Creed was originally written in Greek. The word in Greek that speaks of the place of Hell is “*Gehenna*.” This word describes a final retribution or physical place. The Apostles Creed does not use this word. In the Apostle’s Creed, we find the statement “*he descended into Hell*” using the Greek word “*Hades*.”

The word Hades, in Greek, refers to the state of death. It could be translated as “*descended to those below*.” It does not refer to the place we recognize today as hell – it refers to the physical state of death. When the **Apostles' Creed** took its English form in the sixteenth century, “**hell**” meant **hades** as such, rather than the final state of the lost (which Jesus called **gehenna**), as it always is today.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2000/february7/31.74.html>

Acts 2:31 His soul was not left in **Hades**, nor did His flesh see corruption.

The Apostles’ Creed is an expanded version of the Old Roman Creed that was being used as early as the second century. Early church leaders believed the creed was written by the apostles themselves, but we don’t really know.

This statement that Jesus *descended into hell* is believed to have been **added later, around AD 390**. This would have been at the same time a bishop named Apollinarius was teaching. He was stating that Jesus was not fully human, therefore, could not be an effective sacrifice for the sins of mankind. At the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, this doctrine was condemned.

There are several thoughts as to why this statement is not in the **Nicene Creed**. The Nicene Creed was developed at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Emperor Constantine gathered church leaders to create a statement of faith in response to the teachings of a man named Arius. Constantine wanted the Christian church to have a statement of faith that would unite each denomination. This would have been before the addition in the Apostle’s Creed.

In Ephesians 4:9-10, it is stated that if Jesus ascended, He must “*also first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things*.” Though Jesus’ body might have been there in the borrowed tomb for three days, His spirit had gone to *Hades* to conquer the last enemy of God’s: *death*. First Corinthians 15:26-27 states this truth clearly: “*The last enemy that will be destroyed is death*.”

Revelation 1:18: I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of **Hades** and of *Death*.

These passages seem to suggest Jesus went somewhere after he died on the cross like “*the heart of the earth*” (Matthew 12:40) or “*into the lower regions*” (Ephesians 4:9).

From these passages, some have argued that Jesus did go to hell (Hades) after his crucifixion and death.

### **Are People in Hell now?**

We learn from the narrative of Lazarus in Luke 16 when the rich man died, he found himself in Hades (Greek: ᾗδης). The rich man did not enter a kind of sleep known as “*soul sleep*,” as some groups teach. Instead, he immediately went to a place of judgment. Just as this man found himself in Hades shortly after his physical death, we can infer from this passage that people are in Hades right now awaiting final judgment.

There is a technical sense in which the final state of judgment, being cast into the lake of fire, Hell proper, which is the second death (Revelation 20:18), comes later, but it is clear that those who have not repented and trusted in Christ face the consequences immediately after death.

### **What About Annihilation?**

Some folks have tried to ignore or spiritualize all references to eternal torment. One position known as “*annihilationism*” argues that hell is temporary or non-existent. Annihilationists do not believe in a real place of eternal, conscious punishment of unredeemed sinners.

The major issue with annihilationists is how they handle the Bible. Annihilationism requires every instance of eternal punishment to be reinterpreted as an allegory or symbol. Annihilationists cannot explain Matthew 25:46 (“*And these will go away into eternal punishment ...*”) or Revelation 14:11 (“*And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever ...*”) apart from allegorizing Scripture in an unjustified manner.

### **Jesus “Hard Saying”**

Furthermore, if Matthew 25:46 does not teach an eternal hell, it cannot teach an eternal heaven, since the same words are used to describe each. In addition, the majority position of church teachers throughout history has advocated for the traditional understanding of **hell as eternal**, conscious punishment, while those who have denied hell have been considered heretics.

Despite the emotional difficulty of the doctrine of hell, the **Bible records more words Jesus spoke about hell than he did about heaven**. Hell is the just punishment for sin. God demonstrated his perfect righteousness by judging sin in two ways. Firstly, God condemned sin in the sacrifice of his eternal Son, a punishment more than all creatures combined could ever suffer. Secondly, God will forever punish Satan, his demonic hordes, and all other unrepentant evildoers in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 21:8). In

this way, God underscores his justice against sinful, rebellious creatures in light of his infinite holiness. (A/G)

## Did Jesus Suffer in Hell?

The notion that Jesus suffered in hell is not found in Scripture. The **erroneous teaching** goes like this: After His crucifixion, the Lord's body was placed in a tomb, and His spirit went to hell. There He suffered all the torments of hell that we would have suffered until he satisfied God the Father. But Satan, death, and hell could not hold Him. Acts 2:24-27 is used to support this position:

*“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him...Therefore did My heart rejoice, and My tongue was glad...Because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.”*

It is taught that because Christ was not Himself deserving of punishment, the Lord was resurrected from hell and the grave by the power of God. Some will even go so far as to say that you have to believe that Christ suffered in hell to be saved.

This is a **dangerous doctrine**. It is actually an **attack against the Cross of Christ**. The word “*hell*” in Acts 2:27 is translated from the Greek word *Hades*. Hades is in the center of the earth. At the time of Christ's death, it had two compartments: Abraham's bosom and torment (Hades/Sheol proper). We see this in the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. After they died, Lazarus was in Paradise in Abraham's bosom (v. 22). The rich man was “*in hell [hades]...in torments*” (v. 23).

Firstly before Jesus dies, He speaks to the thief beside Him as it is recorded in the Gospel of Luke. The thief says to Jesus, “*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*” (Luke 23:42). Jesus responds by saying in Luke 23:43 “*Truly, I say to you, **today you will be with me in paradise.***” Jesus promises the thief that he would be **reunited with Christ in paradise that very day; not in hell.**

Secondly, when Jesus died on the cross, he became the final and ultimate sacrifice for our sin. The death of Jesus on the cross meant that he made full payment for our sins. John 19:30 says “*When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “**It is finished,**” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*”

The Greek word (tetelestai) used here for “*finished*” actually means “**paid in full**”. This is what Jesus Christ came to do. He came to pay the price for our sins, and the debt had to be paid in full. The moment that Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross, full payment had been paid. Nothing further is required.

Thirdly, at the very moment that Christ died, the **temple veil** that covered the entrance to the holy of holies was **torn in two from top to bottom**. Matthew 27:50-51 *“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”*

This was extremely significant. **The torn veil meant that the shedding of the blood of Jesus was a sufficient atonement for our sins**. The tearing of the veil signified that the way into the Holy of Holies is open to all people. It is available to both Jew and Gentile, for all time, for those having faith in Jesus Christ. Nothing further is required, or ever will be necessary.

From these passages, we can understand that **Jesus paid the price in full for our sins on the cross**. He did not have to continue to pay for our sins by suffering further in hell. This becomes borderline **heresy**. It implies that Jesus’ death on the cross was insufficient. That is was **Christ death plus** something. In this case, this doctrine is saying that it is His crucifixion plus torment. But, Jesus’ shed blood paid it all:

Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and **without shedding of blood is no remission**.

Matthew 26:28 For this is my **blood of the new testament**, which is shed for many for the **remission of sins**.

Romans 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through **faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the **remission of sins** that are past, through the forbearance of God;

It is never Christ plus anything. To believe that Jesus had to be tormented to ‘*satisfy God*’ completely violates the doctrine of the **Simplicity of God**. The Simplicity of God states that God is not the sum of His attributes. He does not ebb and flow in His attributes. No, He is all love, all grace, all mercy, all justice, all omniscient, all eternal, etc. ... all the time. Even in justice He is still all love. Jesus did not have to be tormented enough to satisfy God the Father. **His shed blood paid the price** for our sin once and for all.

Christ fully faced the judgment of God against our sins upon His Cross during the three hours of worldwide darkness (Luke 23:44). As He did, Christ experienced the realities of hell at the Cross: *separation from the Father, darkness, torment, thirst, and the fire of God’s wrath against sin*. He was our blessed Substitute at the Cross; He paid sin’s penalty for us and took God’s wrath in our place.

When Christ cried out, “***It is finished***” (John 19:30), He meant that the payment for sin was complete and paid in full. To say that Christ also needed to suffer the penalty for sin in hell for three days and three nights is to teach otherwise.

For three days and three nights our Lord was in the center of the earth (Matt. 12:40). We learn where His soul went after He died when He told the believing thief on the cross beside Him, “*Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise*” (Luke 23:43).

**He did not go to hell when He died. He did not suffer in torment in Hades.** His spirit descended into the Paradise (Abraham’s Bosom) section of Hades where the spirit of the penitent thief went also. Three days later, Jesus rose again from the dead, triumphant over sin and death!

Ephesians 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he **also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?** 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

1 Peter 3:19 By which also he went and **preached unto the spirits in prison;**

### **Is Hell Eternal?**

This leads to **another false doctrine** that Hell is not an eternal state. For if Jesus could ‘*satisfy*’ God the Father by being tormented in ‘hell’ for three days for the sin of the whole world, then surely man could eventually ‘*satisfy*’ God for his own sin after enough torment. But, Scripture says otherwise:

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, **into everlasting fire**, prepared for the devil and his angels: ... 46 And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into life eternal.

While God’s final judgment is eternal there is also mention in the new testament of Hades. We see this in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. After they died we see that the rich man went to a place called Hades.

Luke 16:22 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

The rich man was being tormented in Hades however this is not the final destination of those who reject Christ. To get the full picture we need to move forward into the book of Revelation which talks about something called the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall

be **tormented day and night for ever and ever**. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and **Hades gave up the dead** that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then **death and Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ... 15 And **whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire**.

The first death is when your spirit is separated from your body. The second death is when your spirit is separated from God for all eternity. Hell is eternal. It is not about by being punished enough to satisfy God to get out. It is not temporary. No, God reluctantly sends those to Hell (the Lake of Fire) who rejected Him and salvation through the blood of Christ. It is final.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.

“In the long run the answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell is itself a question: ‘What are you asking God to do?’ To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But he has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They will not be forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid that is what he does.” - C.S. Lewis

"Hell is a place or **state of eternal punishment** inhabited by those rejected by God." – Norman Geisler

In Isaiah 66:24, we read of the devouring worm “*will not die*” and the consuming fire “*will not be quenched*.” The reality is that God doesn’t send anyone to hell, they choose to go. Sadly, these false doctrines lead to yet more false doctrine: *universalism, annihilation, and purgatory*.

## **Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?**

On the cross, Jesus said: “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” Why?

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

I would seem that He was **pointing to prophecy** being fulfilled. The Hebrews treated the first line of a Psalm like the title. Jesus **quoted the first line of Psalm 22.**

Psalm 22:1 **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?** why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? 2 O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But thou art holy, **O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.** ... 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 **My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.** 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: **they pierced my hands and my feet.** 17 **I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.** 18 **They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.**

Part of this Psalm is clearly David lamenting how it seemed that God has deserted him. Then, **in the midst of the Psalm, David is prophesying Christ's crucifixion.** David's hands and feet had not been pierced, but Jesus' had. They "*cast lots*" for His garments.

It is difficult to understand in what sense Jesus was "*forsaken*" by God. It is certain that God approved His work. It is certain that Jesus was innocent. He had done nothing to forfeit the favor of God. In those awful moments, as evil men were allowed to do whatever they wanted to Jesus, our Lord expressed His feelings of abandonment. God placed the sins of the world on His Son, and Jesus for a time felt the desolation of being unconscious of His Father's presence. It was at this time that "*God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

## **Why Did Jesus Descend into Hades?**

Where was Jesus, and what was He doing, during the three days of His death?

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; **so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

We are told that He descended into Hades (Sheol). This leaves the begging question, why did Jesus descend into Hades? It would seem that first and foremost, Christ descended into Hades as a triumphant king to proclaim his victory over sin, death, and the devil to the saints who had died before him.

1 Peter 4:6 For for this cause was the **gospel preached also to them that are dead**, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

First, the Good News: We know now that when we die we are ushered directly into the presence of the Lord. As Paul said, “*to be absent from the body, [is] to be present with the Lord.*”

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be **absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**

Death is our **passport to eternity**. When we die in Christ, we now, as New Testament Christians, go to Heaven – Paradise. Jesus paid the price for our sin on the cross and by His shed blood. “*It is finished.*” The temple veil is torn in two.

So what happened to **Old Testament believers** who were looking forward to Christ and redemption? Did they go straight to Heaven? It would seem from the Bible that they did not. It would appear that they were held in Hades – Abraham’s Bosom or Torment. Consider David’s statement about Jesus:

Acts 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, **that his soul was not left in Hades, neither his flesh did see corruption.**

God’s Word is **nuanced**. Our churches do a terrible job of teaching the more subtle nuanced details of the Bible. It requires careful study to understand deeper truths. Most do not like nuanced study. Most want black and white, simplified, dumbed-down doctrine. It is easier to be wrong than to be right. We put God in a box, and attempt to keep Him there. We compartmentalize our walk with God and His Word.

This is one of those areas that digging deeper is required to understand the details. Sadly, on some points like this, the Bible only tells us so much. We must be careful to keep our beliefs in line with what we can know from the Word of God. We must accept that some things cannot be completely discerned from Scripture.

It would appear, from what the Bible does tell us, that Old Testament believers went to **Abraham’s Bosom**, a chamber, if you will, of Hades. Recall again the story of Lazarus:

Luke 16:22 The time came when the beggar died and the **angels carried him to Abraham’s side**. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

It would seem that the dead in the Old Testament, before Christ’s atonement, were held in Hades – either, Abraham’s Bosom or Torments – Hades proper. After Jesus’ crucifixion, He descended to Hades to preach the Gospel and set the captives free.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also **he went and preached unto**

**the spirits in prison;** 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.**

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, **he led captivity captive**, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that **he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?** 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

As **Noah** preached righteousness, suffered unjustly, and rescued those who were with him, so also did Christ. That is about as much as we know. Did he preach the Gospel to both chambers of Hades? Could those in Hades proper – Torments – be saved? Beats me! But, it would seem clear that he took those in Abraham's Bosom with Him to Paradise – Heaven.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, **he led captivity captive**, and gave gifts unto men.

"It is clear that our Lord as the man Christ **Jesus went to a place of the departed dead** called in the Old Testament 'Sheol' and in the New Testament, 'Hades,' the word 'hell' [often] being the translation of the Greek word 'Hades.'" - *Kenneth West*

In traditional Christian theology, the "*Harrowing of Hell*," or "*the descent of Christ into Hades*," is the saving act of Christ to the souls in Hades between His Crucifixion and Resurrection. In triumphant descent, Christ preached salvation to the souls held captive there since the beginning of the world.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

## Eternal Focus

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Like sand in an hour glass, our days are numbered. Only God knows how many days we have on this earth. It behooves us to use out time and resources (“*talents*”) wisely. But, what does it mean to use it wisely?

There is the wisdom of the world, and there is the wisdom of God. God’s wisdom always has an eternal focus. The world’s wisdom is focused on the here and now; it is temporal and self-indulgent.

Psalm 90:9 ... we spend our years as a tale that is told. 10 ... for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ... 12 So **teach us to number our days**, that we may **apply our hearts unto wisdom**.

God is eternal, existing outside of time. We are created by God as eternal beings trapped in a temporal body. Death is our spirit’s passport to eternity. One day we will step out of time to join God in the eternal, to be with Him forever.

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting**, thou art God.

Presently, we are trapped in time – in our temporal existence on this earth. It is easy to become lost in this temporal spatial existence, forgetting that one day we will step permanently into eternity.

We are to “*number our days*.” With the “*cares of this world*,” it is easy to lose sight of the eternity of our spirit – the essence of our creation.

Mark 4:19 And the **cares of this world**, and the **deceitfulness of riches**, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and **bring forth fruit**, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

The devil is keen to keep us distracted with this world – with the “*cares of this life*.” He offers us all sorts of pleasure to keep us focused on the life we live here on earth.

Luke 21:34 And **take heed to yourselves**, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and **cares of this life**, and so **that day come** upon you **unawares**.

In this last passage, Jesus is speaking of His Second Coming. But, death will also come unaware. In our time, between our salvation and death, we are to “*bring forth fruit.*” We are to be about God’s business, trusting Him to be about our business - our temporal needs.

Matthew 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... 33 But **seek ye first the kingdom of God**, and his righteousness; and all **these things shall be added** unto you.

We accrue treasure in heaven, in eternity, only during our present life. Every man will receive a reward for what he did with his life, be it good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For **we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may **receive the things done in his body**, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

It is easy to become consumed with the affairs of the world forgetting to focus on eternity. Once we die, there will be no further opportunity to lay up eternal treasure.

Matthew 6:4 That thine **alms may be in secret**: and thy Father which seeth in secret **himself shall reward thee openly**.

## **Estates**

It sheds a disconcerting light on another worldly construct brought into the Church. There is a push to get folks to leave their wealth to the Church upon their death. It is sold under the guise of estate planning.

There is nothing particularly wrong with that; except, that God says a “*good man*” leaves “*an inheritance to his children’s children.*”

Proverbs 13:22 A **good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children**: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

Moreover, it leaves the impression that Christians can ‘*have all their cake and eat it too.*’ We are to use our God-given estates for His purposes in this life. I suspect that many believe they can forgo giving to the Kingdom of God in this life, and then leave it to the Kingdom when they die.

They believe they can keep all they earn to enjoy in this world, and then when they don't need it any more, give it to God. I suspect, and I believe it is doubtful, that they will accrue any treasure with this self-indulgent scheme.

God told us to give, in the here and now, trusting Him to provide.

Luke 6:38 **Give**, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

In doing so, He promises that we will lay up treasure in heaven.

Matthew 6:19 **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth**, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## Talents

The same principle of giving, applies to using our time and talents for the Lord, and His business. God gave us each talents to use for His purposes. We can only do so while we live in this world.

The temporal now is all that matters for eternity. It is only what we do in this life that lays up treasure in heaven. Once we pass into eternity, the opportunity is past – forever.

If we use out time and talents with an eternal focus, we can expect to hear the words all true Christians long to hear: “*well done, good and faithful servant.*”

Matthew 25:23 His lord said unto him, **Well done, good and faithful servant**; thou hast *been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

## The Day of the Lord

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The “**Day of the Lord**” is mentioned 29 times in the KJV. The “**Day of God**” is mentioned 2 times. The “**Day of Wrath**” is mentioned 4 times. Similar references are mentioned numerous more times.

Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable **day of the Lord** come:

Revelation 6:12 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; ... 17 For the **great day of his wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand?

2 Thessalonians 2:2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, *except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (Mid-point)*

Here are a partial collection of verses referencing the **Day of the Lord**:

1. Isaiah 2:12 For **the day of the Lord** of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:
2. Isaiah 13:6 Howl ye; for **the day of the Lord** is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.
3. Isaiah 13:9 Behold, **the day of the Lord** cometh, cruel both with **wrath** and fierce **anger**, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
4. Isaiah 34:8 For it is the **day of the Lord's** vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.

5. Jeremiah 46:10 For this is **the day of the Lord** God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates.
6. Lamentations 2:22 Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the **day of the Lord's** anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed.
7. Ezekiel 13:5 Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the **day of the Lord**.
8. Ezekiel 30:3 For the day is near, even **the day of the Lord** is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen.
9. Joel 1:15 Alas for the day! for **the day of the Lord** is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.
10. Joel 2:1 Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for **the day of the Lord** cometh, for it is nigh at hand;
11. Joel 2:11 And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for **the day of the Lord** is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?
12. Joel 2:30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the **day of wrath**. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.
13. Joel 3:14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for **the day of the Lord** is near in the valley of decision.
14. Amos 5:18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? **the day of the Lord** is darkness, and not light.
15. Amos 5:20 Shall not **the day of the Lord** be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?
16. Obadiah 1:15 For **the day of the Lord** is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

17. Zephaniah 1:7 Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for **the day of the Lord** is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.
18. Zephaniah 1:8 And it shall come to pass in the **day of the Lord's** sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.
19. Zephaniah 1:14 The great **day of the Lord** is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.
20. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the **day of the Lord's** wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
21. Zephaniah 2:2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the **day of the Lord's** anger come upon you.
22. Zephaniah 2:3 Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the **day of the Lord's** anger.
23. Zechariah 14:1 Behold, **the day of the Lord** cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.
24. Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful **day of the Lord**:
25. Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable **day of the Lord** come:
26. 1 Corinthians 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the **day of the Lord** Jesus.
27. 2 Corinthians 1:14 As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the **day of the Lord** Jesus.
28. 1 Thessalonians 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night.
29. 2 Peter 3:10 But the **day of the Lord** will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the

elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

30. Psalm 110:5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the **day of his wrath**.
31. Isaiah 13:13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the **day of his fierce anger**.
32. Zephaniah 1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the **day of the Lord's wrath**; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. 15 That day is a **day of wrath**, a **day of trouble** and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. 17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the **day of the Lord's wrath**; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.
33. Zephaniah 2:2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the **day of the Lord's anger** come upon you. 3 Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the **day of the Lord's anger**.
34. Proverbs 11:4 Riches profit not in the **day of wrath**: but righteousness delivereth from death.
35. Ezekiel 7:19 They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the **day of the wrath** of the Lord: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels: because it is the stumblingblock of their iniquity.
36. Ezekiel 38:19 For in my jealousy and in the **fire of my wrath** have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; 20 So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.

37. Romans 2: 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the **day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:
38. Revelation 6:12 *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; 13 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. 14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 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; 16 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**: 17 For the **great day of his wrath** is come; and who shall be able to stand?*
39. Jeremiah 30:24 The fierce **anger of the Lord** shall not return, until he hath done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the *latter days* ye shall consider it.
40. Zephaniah 3:8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the **day** that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce **anger**: for all the earth shall be devoured with the **fire of my jealousy**.
41. Isaiah 30:27 Behold, the name of the **Lord cometh** from far, burning with his **anger**, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: 28 And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.
42. 2 Peter 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the **day of God**, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?
43. Revelation 16:14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that **great day of God Almighty**.
44. Job 21:30 That the wicked is reserved to the **day of destruction**? they shall be brought forth to the **day of wrath**.

45. Proverbs 11:4 Riches profit not in the **day of wrath**: but righteousness delivereth from death.
46. Zephaniah 1:15 That day is a **day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a **day of darkness** and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,
47. Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the **day of wrath** and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;
48. Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the **day of Jesus Christ**:
49. Malachi 3:2 But who may abide the **day of his coming**? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:
50. 2 Thessalonians 2:2 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that **the day of Christ** is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, *except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (Mid-point)*
51. Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto **the day of redemption**.

## That Day

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“*That Day*” in Scripture is a blessed day. It goes hand in hand with the “*Day of the Lord*.” In fact, it is another direct reference to Christ’s Second Coming.

In “that day” only one thing will matter; are you in Jesus Christ? Is He the Lord of your life?

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. ...

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
In Him, my righteousness, alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.

“*That day*” is mentioned some 17 times in the King James Version of the Bible. In all these references the subject is Jesus' Second Coming.

1. Matthew 7:22 Many will say to me in **that day**, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
2. Matthew 24:36 But of **that day** and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.
3. Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until **that day** when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
4. Mark 13:32 But of **that day** and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.
5. Mark 14:25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until **that day** that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.
6. Luke 6:23 Rejoice ye in **that day**, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.
7. Luke 10:12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in **that day** for Sodom, than for that city.
8. Luke 17:31 In **that day**, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.
9. Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so **that day** come upon you unawares.
10. John 16:23 And in **that day** ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

11. John 16:26 At **that day** ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:
- 12.1 Thessalonians 5:4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day** should overtake you as a thief.
- 13.2 Thessalonians 1:10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in **that day**.
- 14.2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
- 15.2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against **that day**.
- 16.2 Timothy 1:18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in **that day**: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.
- 17.2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at **that day**: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

## Apocalypse

The word **Apocalypse**, in Greek, means **unveiling**, revelation. This revelation, in Scripture, concerns first and foremost the objective reality of **Good and Evil**, that is, the collective awareness of the **ongoing war between God and Satan**, between the **children of Light and the children of darkness**.

When Christ returns, all will be revealed.

## Morning Star



1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ shall rise first**: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Contrast the similarities of Christ's resurrection and the call to the dead to arise at the Rapture. Bonar makes a compelling comparison:

"It was 'very **early in the morning**' while 'it was yet dark,' that **Jesus rose from the dead**. Not the sun, but **only the morning-star shone** upon His opening tomb. The shadows had not fled, the citizens of Jerusalem had not awaked. It was still night--the hour of sleep and darkness, when He arose. Nor did his rising break the slumbers of the city.

So shall it be 'very early in the morning while it is yet dark,' and when nought but **the morning-star is shining, that Christ's body, the Church, shall arise**. Like Him, His saints shall awake **when the children of the night and darkness are still sleeping** their sleep of death. In their arising they disturb no one.

The world hears not the voice that summons them. As Jesus laid them quietly to rest, each in his own still tomb, like children in the arms of their mother; so, as quietly, as gently, shall He awake them when the hour arrives.

To them come the quickening words, '*Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust*' (Isa. 26:19). **Into their tomb the earliest ray of glory finds its way**. They drink in the first gleams of morning, while as yet the eastern clouds give but the faintest signs of the uprising. Its genial fragrance, its soothing stillness, its bracing freshness, its sweet loneliness, its quiet purity, all so solemn and yet so full of hope, these are theirs. ...

As they **shake off the encumbering turf, flinging mortality aside, and rising, in glorified bodies, to meet their Lord in the air**, they are lighted and guided upward, along the untrodden pathway, by the beams of that Star of the morning, which, like the Star of Bethlehem, conducts them to the presence of the King. '**Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.**'" - *Horatius Bonar*

## The Millennial Kingdom - Tabernacles

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The Day of the Lord includes numerous events. Christ returns to gather His elect in what is called the Rapture, He pours out God's Wrath, Engages in the Battle of Armageddon, Judges the Nations in the Sheep and Goat Judgment, then He inaugurates the Millennial Kingdom where Christ will dwell with man, Tabernacle (See: *Feasts of the Lord*) with man.

### Peace – Jesus Reigns Forever

It has been over 100 years since "The War to End All Wars" ended in victory for those who had "fought to make the world safe for democracy." A celebration of thanksgiving followed, and a holiday was established to commemorate that great Armistice Day (now Veterans Day). However, an even greater war soon followed, only to be repeated by innumerable local wars and revolutions.

Instead of a world of liberty and democracy, many of the world's nations are now under the brutal heel of totalitarian dictatorships. In the past 25 centuries there has been a war going on somewhere in the world at least 11 out of every 12 years.

Revelation 11:15 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.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Zechariah 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Jesus Christ will rule and reign over the earth with the Saints from Jerusalem for one thousand years. Israel will be the center of the earth, as it were, in that season.

### **God has promised a New Covenant for Israel**

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

### **The Lord will Reign**

“One day God will swallow up death forever. He will not merely stand at a distance and snap His fingers so death ceases to exist. He will attack it, defeat it, consume it and swallow it. He already began to do this on the cross and in His resurrection. We live in the already and not yet.” – *Randy Alcorn*

Zechariah 14:9 And the **Lord shall be king over all the earth**: in that day shall there be **one Lord**, and his name one.

### **The Raptured Church will Reign with Jesus**

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the **first resurrection**: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years**.

Revelation 2:26 And **he that overcometh**, and **keepeth my works unto the end**, to him will I give **power over the nations**:

Revelation 3:21 To **him that overcometh** will I grant to **sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

### **All the Nations will Keep the Feast of Tabernacles – or no rain**

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that **every one that is left of all the nations** which came against Jerusalem **shall even go up from year to year to worship the King**, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the **feast of tabernacles**. 17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be *no rain*.

### **Armageddon Precedes the Millennial Kingdom – Jesus Finally Touches Down on the Mount of Olives**

Zechariah 14:2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women

ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. ... 4 And his **feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives**, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

### **Satan will be restrained until the End of the Thousand Years**

Revelation 20:3 And **cast him into the bottomless pit**, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he **should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.**

### **Jesus shall then create a New Heaven and New Earth**

God created the universe – space, time and matter – as He spoke it into existence. It was originally wound up, and is now winding down. It is either winding down by God's intended design or as a consequence of the Fall. Either way, in this we see the Second Law of Thermo-dynamics, entropy, at work. As a result, one day after the Thousand-year Reign of Christ, the Millennium, He will remake both Heaven and Earth.

Psalms 102:25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them **shall wax old like a garment**; as a vesture shalt **thou change them**, and they shall be changed: 27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

2 Peter 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth**, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth**, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Isaiah 66:22 For as the **new heavens and the new earth**, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

Revelation 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is **new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God**: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 21:1 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.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Revelation 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for **there shall be no night** there.

Revelation 22:5 And **there shall be no night** there; and they **need no candle, neither light of the sun**; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 21:2 ... **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, ... 3 ... the tabernacle of **God is with men**, and he will dwell with them ... 4 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. 5 ... I make all things new. ... 10 ... that great city, the holy Jerusalem ... 12 And had a wall great and high, and had **twelve gates**, and at the gates **twelve angels**, and names written thereon, which are the names of the **twelve tribes** of the children of Israel: ... 14 And the wall of the city had **twelve foundations**, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ... 18 And the building of the wall of it was of **jasper**: and the city was pure **gold**, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of **precious stones**. ... 21 And the twelve gates were **twelve pearls** ... 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord **God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple** of it. 23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the **glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof**. 22:1 And he shewed me a pure **river of water of life**, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the **tree of life**, which bare **twelve manner of fruits**, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be **no more curse**: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his **servants shall serve him**: 4 And **they shall see his face**; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

## Translation - Resurrection

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Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

One of the most exciting aspects of Christ's Second Coming is the translation, the resurrection that takes place at His return.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then **we which are alive** and remain shall be **caught up together** with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

First, the dead in Christ are raised to **incorruptible bodies**. This is the second resurrection, made possible by Jesus' resurrection. *His Death Certificate became our Birth Certificate*. Those of us alive at the time will be raptured – taken from the earth and translated into incorruptible bodies to be with Jesus forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ shall rise first**:

In this portion of this great chapter on the resurrection—first that of Christ, then the future resurrection of the redeemed—death and resurrection are compared to seed-sowing and harvest. When a seed is planted in the ground, it is as though it had died and is buried. For a long time after its “*death*,” the seed cannot be seen, but finally it rises again as a beautiful flowering plant, or sheaf of grain, or even a lovely tree.

1 Corinthians 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; **it is raised a spiritual body**. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

Philippians 3:21 Who shall **change our vile body**, that it may be fashioned like **unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Jesus made this same analogy. “*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*” (John 12:24; note also Mark 4:26-29). Our human bodies, because of sin and the Curse, eventually die and are buried;

but one day (like the planted seed) they will appear again, but now immortal and glorified, far greater than they were before—that is, of course, if their real inhabitants (their eternal created spirits) have been born again through faith in their already-resurrected Savior.

1 Corinthians 15:48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, **we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.** 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed,** 52 In a moment, **in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:** for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised incorruptible,** and **we shall be changed.** 53 For this corruptible must **put on incorruption,** and this mortal must **put on immortality.** 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Our new **spiritual bodies** rising from the grave will be real bodies (like that of Jesus after He was raised from the dead) but will no longer be under bondage to physical forces of this world as at the present time, but only to spiritual forces. It would seem that our **transfigured bodies** will not be subject to time, space, or matter. Scripture gives very little insight to this wonderful change.

We do know, however, that our spiritual bodies will be “*fashioned like unto his glorious body.*”

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who **shall change our vile body,** that it may be **fashioned like unto his glorious body,** according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him;** for we shall see him as he is.

Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet **in my flesh shall I see God:**

Then, in our glorious, powerful, spiritual bodies, we as “*his servants shall serve him*” in love and joy forever (Revelation 22:3) beginning here on earth during the Millennium and beyond in the New Heaven and New Earth to come.

What kind of body will we have then? “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). In His resurrection body, He could appear and disappear (John 20:19), pass through closed doors (v. 26), be felt by others (Matthew 28:9; John 20:27), eat food (Luke 24:42, 43), and He eventually rose into heaven (Acts 1:9). Paul, who has been dead nearly 2,000 years, asserted: “We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Philippians 3:20-21).

“I think that Resurrection is so much profounder an idea than mere immortality. I am sure we don’t just ‘go on.’ We really die and are really built up again.” – CS Lewis

God will not restore a prior body to the dead but will present them with a new “glorious” body, fit for the eternal environment and service of heaven. Paul could only write of it by analogy, comparing the difference between the old and the new bodies to the difference between a seed and a plant, to different kinds of living things, and to different kinds of celestial bodies. “*So also is the resurrection of the dead.*” It is sown in corruption, dishonor, weakness, as a natural body, but it is raised in incorruption, glory, and power, as a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:37-44).

## The Resurrected Body

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Philippians 3:21 Who (Jesus) **shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ...**

Related to *time, space, and matter*, is the Biblical notion of a future “*resurrected,*” “*glorified,*” “*transfigured,*” “*spiritual,*” “*immortal,*” “*eternal,*” “*celestial,*” “*heavenly,*” “*incorruptible,*” “*immortal*” body. It goes by many names, but it all the same. It will be our future permanent bodies forever.

1 Corinthians 15:40 There are also **celestial bodies**, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

At the **rapture of the saints**, we all receive our “*resurrected,*” “*glorified*” bodies. Our new spiritual bodies rising from the grave will be as real bodies (like that of Jesus after He was raised from the dead) but will no longer be under bondage to physical forces of

this world as at the present time, but only to spiritual forces; at least, so it would seem from scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 In a moment, *in the twinkling of an eye*, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**.

“I think that Resurrection is so much profounder an idea than mere immortality. I am sure we don’t just ‘go on.’ We really die and are really built up again.” – CS Lewis

It would appear from this verse that the generation which is alive at Christ’s Second Coming will **not taste death**, but “*be changed*” “*in the twinkling of an eye*.” At the very least, if death is involved in this “*change*,” it will be virtually instantaneous as we are “caught up.” What a blessing to not experience death.

What can we learn from Scripture about our future **resurrected bodies**? It would seem that our transfigured bodies will not be subject to *time, space, or matter*. Scripture gives very little insight to this wonderful change. We do know, however, that our spiritual bodies will be “*fashioned like unto his glorious body*.”

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who **shall change our vile body**, that it may be **fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.

## **Jesus Resurrected Body**

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Looking at Jesus after the resurrection may give us some insight to what our resurrected, glorified, bodies will be like. In the accounts of the resurrection we are shown that Jesus’ resurrection was a real; it was a physical resurrection. He invited the disciples to touch his wounds and he asks them for food to eat. Therefore this is not a ghost, or anything like that.

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: **handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones**, as ye see me have.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger**, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

But, if this is a real physical body why does it not behave like a physical body in all cases? Why do Mary Magdalene and the disciples on the road to Emmaus not recognize him? Furthermore, why does he simply appear in rooms where the doors are locked?

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the **doors were shut** where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, **came Jesus and stood in the midst**, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ... 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: **then came Jesus, the doors being shut**, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

It seems that He could appear and disappear in and through this physical world as if he were stepping through a curtain.

Luke 24: 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and **he vanished out of their sight**.

He could theoretically pass through doors and walls because they were no more substantial to him than a veil of water vapor. It seems that he passed through His grave clothes. *Note*, however, that nowhere does scripture say the He ‘passed through walls or doors.’ Rather, He appeared in their midst.

“But the function of the locked doors in John’s narrative, both here [v.19] and in v.26, is to stress the miraculous nature of Jesus’ appearance amongst his followers. **As his resurrection body passed through the grave-clothes (v.6-8), so it passed through the locked doors and simply ‘materialized.’**” - DA Carson, *The Gospel According to John*

It would seem that Jesus post-resurrection body was not constrained by *time, space, or matter*. Although, note that the passage does not say that Jesus ‘walked through walls,’ rather He appeared in their midst.

**“No [bible] text says that Jesus passed through walls** or anything like that.” - Wayne Grudem

So, was He traveling through matter, or through dimensions? It is unclear. **Walter Martin** has an interesting perspective; an interesting twist.

“Jesus could have merely appeared in the room, for when a body moves from one dimension to two dimensions it does not go through anything, it merely moves there instantly; when a body moves from two dimensions to three dimensions, it does not go through anything, it merely moves there instantly. Therefore **when a body goes from three dimensions to four,**

**it would not move through anything, it would merely move there instantly.” - Walter Martin**

This is a rather strange verse about how Jesus could appear. It almost seems to imply that He could change His appearance.

Mark 16:11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. 12 **After that he appeared in another form unto two of them**, as they walked, and went into the country.

He would not be constrained by our physical world. For example, He did not need to eat, although has was certainly able to eat.

Matthew 26: 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, **I will not drink henceforth** of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

We see other mysterious ways Jesus moved even prior to His resurrection. How did He do this?

Luke 4:29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 **But he passing through the midst** of them went his way

John 8:59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, **going through the midst of them**, and so passed by.

Even Phillip moved mysteriously in the spirit, as well. It would seem that God can move our physical bodies through *time, space and matter* – or, maybe, through dimensions – if He so desires to accomplish His purposes.

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip**, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But **Philip was found at Azotus**: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

## **Our Resurrected Bodies**

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God will not restore a prior body to the dead but will present them with a new “*glorious*” body, fit for the eternal environment and service of heaven. Paul could only write of it by analogy, comparing the difference between the old and the new bodies to the difference

between a seed and a plant, to different kinds of living things, and to different kinds of celestial bodies.

“*So also is the resurrection of the dead.*” It is sown in corruption, dishonor, weakness, as a natural body, but it is **raised in incorruption, glory, and power, as a spiritual body** (1 Corinthians 15:37-44).

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And **though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God**: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the **redemption of our body**.

Philippians 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who **shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 In a moment, *in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*: for the trumpet shall sound, and the **dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed**. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.

Matthew 22:30 For **in the resurrection they neither marry**, nor are given in marriage, but are **as the angels** of God in heaven.

1 Corinthians 15: 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ... 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; **afterward they that are Christ's at his coming**. ... 35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and **with what body do they come**? ... 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is **raised in incorruption**: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is **raised in power**: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is **raised a spiritual body**. There is a natural body,

and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and **afterward that which is spiritual**. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, *we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ shall rise first**: 17 **Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

What exactly our glorified bodies will be like and how they will differ from our present bodies, is not completely clear in the Bible. But, God “*shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.*” It will no doubt be different, far better, and would appear to not be constrained by time, space and matter.

Many verses seem to teach that our “*resurrected*” bodies will be the same bodies that we have now, except transformed into an “*immortal*” state – not constrained by *time, space and matter*. If it is that God does not create new bodies for us from scratch, but rather resurrects the body that dies, it seems clear that we do not receive our resurrection bodies immediately at death. For our bodies very clearly and evidently remain here on earth and are laid to rest.

## Question of Timing

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We know from God’s Word that when we die in Christ, we are ushered directly into the presence of God.

2 Corinthians 5:6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be **absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord**.

Just like Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross beside Jesus:

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **Today shalt thou be with me in paradise**.

As Christians, when we die, our spirits go to be in the presence of the Lord. We won't have a new, "*spiritual*" body just yet, not until the "*last day*." But we'll still be in Heaven with the Lord. However, when Jesus returns in triumph, and we're given our glorified, "*resurrection*" bodies, things get even better

Some argue that we receive our "*glorified*" bodies at death. But, Scripture makes it clear that that is not the case. The fact that the **resurrection will happen at the return of Christ** has important implications: It means that glorification will be a corporate reality and not an individual experience that happens to each believer separately at death.

All Christians will be raised into glory together. While we all lived at different periods of time, we all came to faith at different times, and we all will have died at different times (except for those who lived until Christ returns), it is an amazing thing that God has planned things such that our glorification will occur at the same time.

Daniel 12:13 But go thou thy way **till the end** be: **for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days**. (at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance. – NIV)

John 6:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should **raise it up again at the last day**. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and **I will raise him up at the last day**.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ shall rise first**: 17 Then **we which are alive and remain shall be caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and **so shall we ever be with the Lord**.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, **when he shall appear, we shall be like him**; for we shall see him as he is.

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly **desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven**: 3 If so be that being clothed **we shall not be found naked**. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Some argue for an intermediate body upon death. I cannot find this in scripture. But, it seems an idle argument because we clearly get our final "*glorified*" body at Christ's return.

The Scripture says we should long for our new “*spiritual*” bodies; that’s the ideal, the finished product, and the ultimate perfection. It will be our “*eterna*” body not constrained by time, space, or matter.

Colossians 3:4 **When Christ**, who is our life, **shall appear**, then shall ye also **appear with him in glory**.

At the present time, Jesus is preparing a place for us in the New Jerusalem that will be “coming down from God out of heaven” (Revelation 21:2) following the Millennial Kingdom.

## Two Messiahs

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No, there are not two messiahs. However, it is interesting to note the sharp distinction between the descriptions surrounding Jesus first coming, with that of His second.

<b>First Coming</b>	<b>Second Coming</b>
He came as a lamb in silence	He will return as the Roaring Lion of Judah
He came on a donkey	He will return on a great white stallion
He came and was judged	He will return to judge
He came in humility	He will return in Glory
He came to suffer	He will return in absolute triumph
He came to die	He will return to reign
He came to bring division	He will return to establish peace
He came as our Savior	He will return as our King and Lord
<b>Messiah Ben (son of) Joseph<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Messiah Ben (son of) David<sup>2</sup></b>

1: Rejected and sold into slavery

2: Israel's greatest king

Confused first century Jewish leaders couldn't believe that there was only one Messiah. They rejected Jesus because his résumé didn't conform to their messianic job description – the Old Testament didn't clearly distinguish between two comings.

Our New Testament gives an edge to better understand. *The New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament; the Old testament is revealed in the New Testament.*

“The first time He came, He entered by a woman's womb. And no one saw Him enter.

The next time He comes, "every eye shall see Him"!

The first time He came as a Lamb.

The next time He is coming as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The first time He came to redeem.

The next time He is coming to reign.

The first time He came to die.

The next time He is going to raise the dead!

The first time men asked, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?"

The next time He is coming as the King of kings!

The first time He got a crown of thorns.

The next time He will get a crown of glory and of gold (Rev. 14:14).

The first time He came in poverty, to a stable.

The next time He is coming in power.

The first time He had an escort of angels.

The next time "He cometh with ten thousands of his saints." (Jude 14)

The first time He came in meekness.

The next time He is coming in majesty!" – *Leonard Ravenhill*

Without a doubt, Jesus will return in different fashion from His first coming.

## **Antichrist**

Beware, prior to Jesus second coming, there will appear a false Christ, known as the Antichrist. It is the First Seal, the First Horseman of the Apocalypse. His coming appears to open the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. He will demand his worship, and deceive many. It leads to what Paul referred to as the "great falling away," also call the Great Apostasy. This counterfeit Christ's false teaching and message to the lost world will include:

- He will allow everyone into heaven
- He came to bring grace division
- He doesn't require obedience
- He doesn't require holiness
- He doesn't require repentance
- He only preaches on love
- He never says anything offensive
- He never tells anyone they're wicked

- He calls everyone his children
- He will not send anyone to hell
- He wants you to do your own Will
- God's commandments are suggestions

Do not be deceived.

## Two Witnesses

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During the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, particularly during the second half, God raises up two witnesses, two prophets, to testify for Him to the world during the dark days of the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. They prophesy for God for 42 months. It would appear to be one last warning of God's impending judgment and a final effort to save the lost.

Zechariah 4:11 Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these **two olive trees** upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? ... 14 Then said he, These are **the two anointed ones**, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Mosaic Law declares that a matter must be settled in the mouth of two witnesses. (Num 35:30) Thus, this seems to be a precursor to final judgment.

Revelation 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under *foot forty and two months*. 3 And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall **prophesy** a *thousand two hundred and threescore days*, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

This is a very unique event. These two have power to stop rain, turn water into blood, bring plagues on the earth, and direct fire against their enemies. The entire world will see them. Their prophetic warnings make man angry against the witnesses. When they have completed their prophetic ministry the Beast will kill them.

Like the "*these things*" Jesus defined as signs of His Second Coming, this event will not take place without notice. The entire world will witness their prophecy, death and resurrection after 3-1/2 days. During the time their dead bodies lay in Jerusalem, the

world even celebrates their death together. Ultimately, they will come to life and ascend to heaven as the world watches.

Revelation 11:5 And if any man will hurt them, **fire proceedeth out of their mouth**, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. 6 These have **power to shut heaven**, that it **rain not** in the days of their prophecy: and have **power over waters** to turn them to **blood**, and to smite the earth with all **plagues**, as often as they will. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the **beast** that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit (*Possibly, the first beast of Revelation 13; the antichrist or the 8<sup>th</sup> and final revived Empire King – Abaddon/Apollyon - man of sin / son of perdition*) shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and **kill them**. 8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their **dead bodies three days and an half**, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and **make merry, and shall send gifts** one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. 11 And after three days and an half the **spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet**; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And **they ascended up to heaven in a cloud**; and their enemies beheld them.

[**Note:** *Who is this Beast?* Consider: Revelation 17:8 The **beast** that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend **out of the bottomless pit**, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. ... Revelation 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. ... 11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.]

What a bizarre event. So who are these two prophets of God? It is hotly debated and draws much speculation. While it is a minor aspect of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel and Christ's second coming, it is intriguing nonetheless.

## Who are the Two?

Their prophetic ministry has clear characteristics of two well known figures from the Old Testament: *Moses and Elijah*. There were two men who did not taste death: *Enoch and Elijah*. Of these two men, it would appear that at least one will experience death during the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel as one of the *two witnesses*.

Malachi 4:5 Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

This takes on more importance in that Elijah is but another sign to watch for prior to the **Day of the Lord** – Christ’s second coming. Elijah plays an important role in Jewish theology. In fact, he has a starring role in the annual Feast of Passover to herald the coming of the Messiah. A chair is set for Elijah during the Passover meal as they continue to look for the coming of the messiah.

This is why Jewish leaders asked John the Baptist “*Art thou Elijah?*” (John 1:21) They were looking, and are still looking, for Elijah to come again. John answered “I am not.” This is one of the reasons the Jews missed Christ’s first coming. They misunderstood the ‘Day of the Lord’ to refer to the messiah’s coming in general; not His second coming specifically.

Yet, the fact that neither Enoch (Gen 5:24) nor Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) has yet experienced death seems to qualify them for the job of the two witnesses who will be killed when their final job is done. All who have gone before us, but two, have died. Some contend that this verse makes it clear that these two prophets must ultimately die:

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is **appointed unto men once to die** ...

But, Moses, some Jewish traditions say, may not have tasted death. This comes from some obscure Jewish tradition and this rather odd and interesting verse:

Jude 1:9 Yet **Michael the archangel**, when **contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses**, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

I do not suggest building a doctrine around this one-off reference to Moses body. Also intriguing is that no one knows where Moses’ grave is. We do not know where Moses’ body is buried. If we did, it would be too easy for man to ‘*idolize*’ his body. However, the Bible tells us quite clearly that Moses died:

Deuteronomy 34:5 So **Moses** the servant of the Lord **died** there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And he **buried him** in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but *no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day*. 7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old **when he died**: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force

abated. 8 And the **children of Israel wept for Moses** in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended.

We know Moses saw the Promised Land, but was not allowed to enter, and was left behind in the desert of Moab. (By the way, Moses did ultimately set foot in the Promised Land as he and Elijah were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.) I am taking God's word at face value – **Moses died**. Thus, only Enoch and Elijah have not died.

## Positions on the Two Witnesses

Who could the two witnesses of the apocalypse be? Here are a few of the prevalent arguments for various options:

- **Two random witnesses** of God's divine choosing. I discount this right off the bat because Malachi 4:5 seems to make it clear that one of the witnesses will be Elijah. The real question is who is the other witness?
- **Moses and Elijah** are seen as possibilities for the two witnesses due to the specific miracles that John says the witnesses will perform. The witnesses will have the power to turn water into blood (Revelation 11:6), which duplicates a famous miracle of Moses (Exodus 7). And the witnesses will have the power to destroy their enemies with fire (Revelation 11:5), which corresponds to an event in Elijah's life (2 Kings 1). Also giving strength to this view is the fact that Moses and Elijah both appeared with Jesus at the transfiguration representing the law and the prophets (Matthew 17:3–4). Further, Jewish tradition expects Moses and Elijah to return, based on the prophecy of Elijah's coming in Malachi 4:5 and God's promise to raise up a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18), which some Jews believe necessitates Moses' return.
  - This is largely a Pre-tribulational view; leading to a serious problem, Elijah must come *before* the 70<sup>th</sup> Week in their eschatological view. As with the Cosmic Disturbances, the Sixth Seal, herein, *immanence* is destroyed.
- **Enoch and Elijah** are seen as possibilities for the two witnesses because of the unique circumstances surrounding their exit from the world. **Enoch and Elijah**, as far as we know, are the only two individuals whom God has **taken directly to heaven without experiencing death** (Genesis 5:23; 2 Kings 2:11). Proponents of this view point to Hebrews 9:27, which says that all men are '*appointed to die once.*' The fact that neither Enoch nor Elijah has yet experienced death seems to qualify them for the job of the two witnesses, who will be killed when their job is done. Then all men will have tasted death. In addition, **both Enoch and Elijah were prophets** who pronounced God's judgment (1 Kings 17:1; Jude 1:14–15).

- Not to encourage getting out into documents that are not part of the accepted cannon of Scripture, but the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (also known as Acts of Pilate) states that those two witnesses who will appear in times of Antichrist to engage in battle with him are **Enoch and Elijah**:  
*"3. One of them answering, said, I am Enoch, who was translated by the word of God: and this man who is with me, is Elijah the Tishbite, who was translated in a fiery chariot. 4. Here we have hitherto been, and have not tasted death, but are now about to return at the coming of Antichrist, being armed with divine signs and miracles, to engage with him in battle, and to be slain by him at Jerusalem, and to be taken up alive again into the clouds, after 3 days and a half." - Gospel of Nicodemus, Chapter 20:3-4.*
- **John the Baptist** came in the spirit of Elijah, we are told. What if Malachi was actually speaking of John the Baptist coming before Jesus first coming?

Luke 1:16 He (John the Baptist) will bring back many of the *people* of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, *to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

Clearly John came as a type of, in the spirit of, Elijah to *“prepare ... the way of the Lord.”*

Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias (Isaiah), saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, **Prepare ye the way of the Lord**, make his paths straight.

Does this nullify the Malachi prophecy? I do not think so – not entirely. Luke repeats the same phrase *“to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.”* (Malachi 4:6) Meaning, I believe for the *just, wise* fathers to again care about speaking the truth of the gospel to the *disobedient, lost* children. Wherein, Luke expounds with, *“the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”* It is the same spirit, with the same purpose.

But, Malachi opens with: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet **before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.**”* (Malachi 4:5) This is rather explicit language. The Day of the Lord is always Christ’s

return, His Second Coming, to gather His elect and pour out God's wrath/judgment. Furthermore, it is "great" for the Saints, and "dreadful" for the lost. His first coming, while "great," was not "dreadful."

Furthermore, Malachi states "*lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*" (Malachi 4:6) This two-witnesses' appearance with Elijah is to warn mankind that God is about to bring judgment for those who do not repent. Jesus did not bring judgment, a "curse," in His first appearing. However, the biggest death nail to this theory is the when John as asked if he was Elijah, he said "no."

John 1:21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, **No**.

Thus, it would seem that Elijah, himself, must be to come again as one of the Two Witnesses prior to Jesus' Second Coming.

- **Elijah and Enoch**, or **Elijah and Moses**, seem to be the pairing left logically standing (it seems that Elijah always gets picked). We can safely assume (unless the two witnesses happen to be men of unknown origin) that at least Elijah is one of the two witnesses.

## Once to Die

Okay, so it appears that Elijah is likely one of the two witnesses. Who is the other? Based on the verse, "**it is appointed unto men once to die**," we can look at it from two perspectives.

First as, *all men will die once*; and secondly, *every man will die only once*. If it was Moses, he would die twice – seems unfair, and unscriptural. If it were Enoch, he would finally die once. But, Enoch seems to get a free pass. I'm not God, but it seems unfair to me for either, Moses to die twice, or Enoch to get a free pass on death.

So, if I had to guess, I would bet on the two witness being Elijah and Enoch; the only two men who have not yet tasted death. Plus, both are *prophets*. Remember these witness prophecy and perform miracles like Elijah and Enoch. Thus, when they die, all men will have experienced death.

I believe that these two prophets walked so closely with the Lord, in obedience to God, that God took them to Heaven, without dying, so that their ultimate death will be for a greater purpose. They will finally die in greater glory for the Lord.

Plus, God only took two men to Heaven without dying. It is interesting that there are two witnesses. There are only two job openings. They fit the bill nicely, on all accounts.

## Enoch Foresaw

Enoch was the father of Methuselah, who was the grandfather of Noah. It is interesting that Enoch saw this day.

Jude 1:14 And **Enoch** also, the seventh from Adam, **prophesied** of these, saying, Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,**

Enoch's "*walk with God*" and the lifestyle that "*pleased God*" are the apparent motives for Jude's reference. Jude tells us (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) that Enoch preached about the second coming of Christ!

Before the Bible was written, before the first world was destroyed in a flood for its evil, before the promise of "the seed" to Abraham and the centuries of God's preparation for the Messiah to come, Enoch was proclaiming that Jesus would come!

You must wonder if he also foresaw his future role. All this seems to further strengthen the role of Enoch as the other Witness.

## The End Comes

An interesting consideration is that these two witnesses may be the ones who share the gospel to the whole world before the end comes.

Matthew 24:14 And this **gospel** of the kingdom shall be **preached in all the world** for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end** come.

It is speculation, but while some see this as sign of the end of time approaching, how will anyone know when this occurs if it is only by means of the Great Commission? The whole world will be watching these two witnesses, as we saw earlier. Thus, the world will likely hear the gospel from them as they warn of impending doom.

Here is an alternate perspective. There is also a '*gospel angel*' depicted in Revelation 14 that is an alternate perspective on the gospel being shared to the whole world before the end.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another **angel** fly in the midst of heaven, **having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Isn't it interesting that even during God's judgment, He is still sharing the Gospel. He would that '*no man would perish.*' This is God's mercy and God's love on display even in His wrath. This is the doctrine of the *Simplicity of God*. God is all love and all justice all the time.

## Rapture Blessing

What a blessing it would be to be of the generation alive when Christ returns. For those who “*endure unto the end*,” a blessed experience awaits.

Mark 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved.

Notice that getting there may be tough. For the “*end*,” in this case, is on the other side of Abomination of Desolation, The Great Tribulation and the Cosmic Disturbances. Those days will be literal hell on earth.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and **pray** always, **that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things** that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Those who are alive when Christ returns will be raptured – gathered to Christ in the air. Our bodies will be regenerated. We will not taste death, it seems. However, it could be that we die as we take on our glorified bodies. But, if not; think about that for a moment.

Adam and Eve tasted death, Abraham tasted death, David and Solomon tasted death, Paul tasted death, even Jesus tasted death. Only two men have not tasted death - *Enoch and Elijah*. Yet, we could be the generation to be translated in a *twinkling of an eye*.

## Wrath of God



There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowl judgments overlaying this period of time. The Seven Seals reflect events on earth as the seals are broken in succession. Once the Seventh Seal is broken, the Scroll can be opened. The Wrath of God is defined in the Scroll as Seven Trumpets and Seven Bowl judgments.

Event	Verses	Significance
<b>1st Seal</b>	Rev 6:1, Mat 24:5	White Horse - <b>Antichrist</b>
<b>2nd Seal</b>	Rev 6:3, Mat 24:6	Red Horse - War
<b>3rd Seal</b>	Rev 6:5, Mat 24:7	Black Horse - Famine
<b>4th Seal</b>	Rev 6:7, Mat 24:7	Pale Horse - Disease and Death
<b>5th Seal</b>	Rev 6:9, Mat 24:9	Martyrs under the Altar
<b>6th Seal</b>	Rev 6:12, Mat 24:29	Cosmic Disturbances
<b>7th Seal</b>	Rev 8:1	Scroll is opened. <b>Trumpets</b> – are directed at a third of the earth
<b>1st Trumpet</b>	Rev 8:7	hail, fire, blood rained - third of trees and grass destroyed
<b>2nd Trumpet</b>	Rev 8:8	burning mountain (maybe a meteor) - third of sea became blood
<b>3rd Trumpet</b>	Rev 8:10	star wormwood fell - third of waters became bitter, and poison
<b>4th Trumpet</b>	Rev 8:12	third of planets darken - including sun and moon
<b>5th Trumpet</b>	Rev 9:1	loosing of locusts (maybe demons) to torture unsealed for five months
<b>6th Trumpet</b>	Rev 9:13	four demons loosed from Euphrates to loose 200,000,000 horsemen
<b>7th Trumpet</b>	Rev 11:15, Rev 15:1	<b>Bowl Judgments</b> – are directed at all the earth
<b>1st Bowl</b>	Rev 16:2	sores on men with mark of beast
<b>2nd Bowl</b>	Rev 16:3	sea to blood - all sea life died
<b>3rd Bowl</b>	Rev 16:4	rivers to blood
<b>4th Bowl</b>	Rev 16:8	scorching heat from sun
<b>5th Bowl</b>	Rev 16:10	complete darkness
<b>6th Bowl</b>	Rev 16:12	Euphrates river dries up making way for kings of the East

<b>7th Bowl</b>	Rev 16:17	great earthquake and hail, destruction of Babylon, and <b>Armageddon</b>
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## Trumpets and Bowls

God's judgment of wicked mankind (and, of the nations) for how they have treated His elect (especially, Israel) are described figuratively as Trumpet and Bowl/Vial judgments. Each is executed by select angels. Revelation describes seven Trumpet judgments.

Zephaniah 1:2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. 3 I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked: and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the Lord.

At the last Trumpet Judgment, there are then seven bowl, or often called vial, judgments within the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. One-third destruction of the earth progressively occurs 11 times in Trumpets 1-6.

- 1) 1/3rd Earth, 1st Trumpet, Rev 8:7 NIV
- 2) 1/3rd Trees, 1st Trumpet, Rev 8:7
- 3) 1/3rd Sea Blood, 2nd Trumpet, Rev 8:8
- 4) 1/3rd Sea Creatures Die, 2nd Trumpet, Rev 8:9
- 5) 1/3rd Ships Destroyed, 3rd Trumpet, Rev 8:9
- 6) 1/3rd Rivers Wormwood, 3rd Trumpet, Rev 8:10
- 7) 1/3rd Springs Wormwood, 3rd Trumpet, Rev 8:10
- 8) 1/3rd Sun Dark, 4th Trumpet, Rev 8:12
- 9) 1/3rd Moon Dark, 4th Trumpet, Rev 8:12
- 10) 1/3rd Stars Dark, 4th Trumpet, Rev 8:12
- 11) 1/3rd Killed, 6th Trumpet, Rev 9:14



This gives most the opportunity and the time to repent while God has gotten their attention with curses and plagues. (Deuteronomy 30:1) God's purpose for the curses and plagues is for recipients to "come to their senses."

Revelation 11:15 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.** 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17 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.

Within the 7th Trumpet, the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> increases to 100% during the seven Bowls/Vials of God's continued wrath! This is the final sequence of judgment.

- 100% "Sea turns to blood" 2nd Vial, Rev 16:3.
- 100% "Sea Creatures died" 2nd Vial, Rev 16:3.
- 100% "Rivers & Springs" became "Blood" 3rd Vial, Rev 16:4.
- 100% Global Military Destroyed 6th Vial, Rev 16:14-16 & 19:15-21.
- 100% "Cities of the Nations fell" 7th Vial, Rev 16:19.
- 100% "Islands" & "Mountains" "no longer found," Rev 16:20.
- As for surviving people, a specific quantity is not defined, but God says:

**7 Bowls of Wrath & 100%**  
1/3<sup>rd</sup> Destruction occurring 11Xs in 7 Trumpets  
INCREASES to 100% in 7 Bowls of Wrath!

- 100% - Painful Sores for ALL Mark of Beast & Image worshipers, - 1<sup>st</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:3
- 100% - Sea turns to blood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:3
- 100% - Sea Creatures die, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:3
- 100% - Rivers... became blood, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:4
- 100% - Springs... became blood, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:4
- 100% - Combined Global Militararies Destroyed, 6<sup>th</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:14-16 & 19:15-21
- 100% - Cities of the Nations fell, 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:9
- 100% - Babylon Destroyed, 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:19
- 100% - Every Island Flew Away, 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:20
- 100% - No Mountains were found, 7<sup>th</sup> Bowl - Rev 16:20

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Isaiah 13:12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

However, we know that there will be many who survive. While it would appear that no one could survive such an apocalyptic event, some estimate that 25% of mankind survives. These will face the judgment of nations and live to repopulate the earth during the Millennium reign of Jesus in Jerusalem. (<https://revelationscriptures.com/>)

## Angels

As an interesting side note, select angels execute God's judgment. God's host of angels is mighty in power and capable of destroying the entirety of mankind. However, they are restrained to do precisely as God orders. God's judgment is restrained. It is interesting to consider a little of their potential:

Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me **more than twelve legions of angels?**

Isaiah 37:36 Then the **angel of the Lord** went forth, and **smote** in the camp of the Assyrians a **hundred and fourscore and five thousand**: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

"The Lord Jesus once again claimed 'God was his Father, making himself equal with God' (John 5:18), but He also made a direct reference to His divinity using powerful Old Testament terminology. In the era in which

Jesus made this statement, a Roman legion was 6,000 soldiers, so 12 legions of angels would have been 72,000 strong. If a single angel could kill 185,000 men (Isaiah 37:36), Jesus was basically inferring that as the Lord of hosts He could employ enough angels to kill every person on Earth and then some (**13 billion**). So, obviously He did not need Peter's sword to defend Him as He was being betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane." - *ICR*

## 144,000 Sealed – First-fruits

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Who are the 144,000 who are sealed by God? This seems to be of real interest to most folks. It is a question that comes up every time the subject of Christ's Return is taught. These are not raptured saints. They are not people saved during the Wrath of God.

These are select Jews from the Nation of Israel. In fact, they could be Orthodox Jews still faithfully practicing Judaism, steadfastly waiting for the Messiah's appearance. They would appear to have genetically pure bloodlines to the original tribes of Israel. Thus, is but another example of how God will treat the Nation of Israel as a unique entity during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. God's immutable promises to Israel stand eternally.

Revelation 7:1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, **till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.** 4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an **hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.** 5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. 7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

These are 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. They will be sealed upon Christ's Second coming – the Day of the Lord. They are sealed before the Seventh Seal is broken, the Scroll is opened and the Wrath of God commences.

They are undefiled. They follow Jesus. They are the Israel's first-fruits of the Millennium to come. They will be supernaturally protected during the Wrath of God. Probably Jewish evangelists protected to preach the Gospel to the entire world during the Day of the Lord – the Wrath of God about to come.

We seem them reappear again later in Revelation with Jesus on the Temple Mount:

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a **Lamb** stood on the mount Sion, and with him an **hundred forty and four thousand**, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are they which were **not defiled with women**; for they are virgins. These are they which **follow the Lamb** whithersoever he goeth. These were **redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God** and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are **without fault** before the throne of God.

During the first half of Daniel's 70th week, global problems will be greatly increasing during the "*Beginning of Sorrows*," at the same time the Antichrist will be growing in influence, making alliances, and becoming more recognized around the world.

At the midpoint of this 70th week, the antichrist will suddenly break his treaty with the Jewish people. To discerning Jews and Christians, it will now be obvious that the person desolating the temple is the Antichrist, and that he is not a man of peace, but a man of war. He will begin aggressively persecuting them during the Great Tribulation, the Fifth Seal (Matthew 24:9, 21).

Matthew 24:15-25 instructs the Jewish people living in Israel to run for their lives, and Revelation 12:13-17 tells us that many of them will miraculously escape and will be protected during the last 3½ years of this 70th week. At this point, this frustrated and angry antichrist will "*make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*" (v. 17).

In addition to the escape of these Jews, the remnant, there is another group of 144,000 Jewish people who are sealed and physically kept safe. During this time, these 144,000 will be spiritually saved, becoming holy worshipers and faithful followers of Jesus (Revelation 14:1-5).

God's wrath will then be poured out upon the earth and a large number of rebellious and unrepentant Jews will be killed – *two-thirds of their entire population* (Zechariah 13:8-9). But this Jewish remnant which had escaped the Antichrist will continue to be protected up until the end of this 70th week.

The remnant, along with the chosen 144,000, will be redeemed by the Lord – “*all Israel shall be saved*” (Romans 11:26). These newly saved Jewish believers will then remain with Christ and reign with Him during the Millennial (1,000-year) Kingdom (Revelation 20-21).

## The Woman and the Dragon

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A 6,000-year-old war that began in the Garden of Eden will one day be completed. It is a battle to interrupt the execution of God's plan of Salvation. Spoiler alert, God wins.

Revelation 11:15 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. ...

17 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. 18 **And the nations were angry** ...

Psalms 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?  
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his **anointed**, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

## The Age-old Conflict

Here in Revelation 12 we see the ongoing conflict of Satan and Israel as John first looks back over history, before explaining the culmination of the conflict during the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a **woman** clothed with the **sun**, and the **moon** under her feet, and upon her head a crown of **twelve stars**: 2 And **she** being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a **great red dragon**, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and **seven crowns** upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the **dragon** stood before the **woman** which was ready to be delivered, for to devour **her child** as soon as it was born.

5 And **she** brought forth a **man child**, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her **child** was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the **woman** fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*.

Now John skips to a future look at the heavenly battle that will one day lead to the **Abomination of Desolation**, and especially, to the **Great Tribulation**.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: **Michael** and his angels fought against the **dragon**; and the **dragon** fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 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.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his **Christ**: for the **accuser of our brethren is cast down**, which *accused them before our God day and night*.

Here, at the middle of the Seventh Week of Daniel, Satan and his demon angels are finally cast out of heaven. No longer will he be the “*accuser of the brethren*.” At this point, as Martin Luther says in his song *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, Satan’s time is short and his doom is sure. This sets the stage for the Abomination of Desolation and Great Tribulation. The devil moves hard and fast to destroy God’s people.

Revelation 12:12 ... Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the **devil** is come down unto you, having great wrath, because **he knoweth that he hath but a short time**. 13 And when the **dragon** saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the **woman** which brought forth the **man child**.

## The Woman

Here we are talking about the “**woman**,” the pregnant woman. Do not confuse the “*woman*” here with the “*great whore*” of Revelation 17:1-2 or the “*Mother of Harlots*” of Revelation 17:5.

If there ever was a verse for which more nonsense has been made, this is it. Yet, its understanding is rather simple and obvious to those not looking for bizarre interpretations to justify their aberrant prophetic beliefs.

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a **woman** clothed with the **sun**, and the **moon** under her feet, and upon her head a **crown of twelve stars**:

The **Woman** is NOT Mary, nor is it the Church. Israel has not been replaced by the Church; the literal nation of Israel still holds a key place in end-time prophecy. The **Woman** is clearly the descendants of Abraham through Jacob (Historic Israel) – Jewish People – the recipients of God’s Unconditional Covenants.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between **thee** (*Dragon; serpent*) and the **woman** (*Israel*), and between **thy** seed and **her** seed; it shall bruise **thy** head, and thou shalt bruise **his** heel.

Revelation 12:4 And ... the **dragon** stood before the **woman** which was ready to be delivered, for to devour **her** child as soon as it was born. 5 And **she** brought forth a **man** child (*Jesus*), who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and **her** child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

There are numerous immutable **covenants** God made to the descendent of Abraham and the Nation of Israel. They have not been nullified nor has the “church” replaced Israel: *Abrahamic* (Gen 12:1-3), *Mosaic* (Ex. 19-31, Dt. 29-30), *Land* (Gen. 15:1-18), *Davidic* (2 Sam. 7:8-16), *New* (Jer. 31:31-34, Mat. 26:28). The promises will not fail. The nation of Israel is, as such, part and parcel of end-time prophecy.

The **Sun** depicts sovereign divine honor.

Romans 9:4 Who are **Israelites**; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the **glory**, and the **covenants**, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the **promises**; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh **Christ** came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

God chose the Jewish people to be the channel of Salvation (John 4:22).

Revelation 12:2 And **she** being with **child** cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Genesis 28:14 And **thy** seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in **thee** and in thy **seed** shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Israel travailed for 2,000 years in the birth of Jesus Christ. **Satan** did all within his power to prevent it. For this reason, God said:

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless **thee**, and curse him that curseth **thee**: and in **thee** shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The **Woman** is seen in Dominance with **Moon** in subjection “*under her feet.*” The moon refers to **Gentile nations** – maybe, more specifically, the Islamic nations (*Crescent moon*) and the end-time victory over nations of the world. The **Twelve Stars** are 12 Sons of **Jacob**, the **12 Tribes of Israel**.

## The **Great Red Dragon** – Wonder in Heaven

Throughout the ages, Satan has worked through earthly kingdoms and demonically empowered men to attempt to thwart God’s plan for Israel to bring forth our Savior. Here we see Satan described as a **red dragon** with seven heads. His ultimate goal has always been to undermine God’s redemptive plan of salvation through earthy kingdoms.

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a **great red dragon**, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and **seven crowns** upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the **dragon** stood before the **woman** which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her **child** as soon as it was born.

**Seven Heads** are seven powerful Kingdoms; Empires – Not Seven Hills in Rome; Not Countries; Not the Papacy. All shared the desire to **annihilate Israel** (*The Woman Clothed in the Sun*), or more specifically, Jesus the child of the woman. This parallels Daniel’s *four beasts* and the *gold-silver-bronze-iron-clay statue*. Satan has used earthly kingdoms as pawns in his effort to destroy Israel – God’s chosen people.

## The **Great Red Dragon** – Seven Heads

There are six past empires, or kingdoms, that we know exactly who they are from history and scripture. Each successive empire absorbed the previous, and more. More importantly, each controlled Jerusalem for a season. The seventh and the eight are not clearly defined in Scripture, and have led to much debate and subjective speculation.

**Head 1 – Egyptian** – A place of refuge turns into a place of slavery and death – All male children killed (Ex. 1:15-16) – Pharaoh tried to kill them at the Red Sea

Zechariah 10:11 ... the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.

**Head 2 – Assyrian** – Defeated Egypt in 671 BC. In 722 BC defeated Ten Northern Tribes of Israel. Twenty years later Sennacherib of Assyria attacked the Southern Kingdom, Judah,

and besieged Jerusalem. An Angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

Zechariah 10:11 ... the pride of Assyria shall be brought down ...

**Head 3 – Babylonian** – Defeated the Assyrians in 612 BC. In 606 BC – 598 BC they sacked Jerusalem three times and on the final assault, in 586 BC, destroyed the Temple and plucked out the eyes of Zedekiah, the last king in the Davidic lineage. After 70 years, a remnant rebuilt Jerusalem.

Daniel 5:28 Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

**Head 4 – Medo-Persian** – Defeated the Babylonians in 539-536 BC. Esther describes the decree to kill all Jews to King Artaxerxes thwarting Haman's plot.

Daniel 10:20 ... I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

**Head 5 – Grecian** – 336-330 BC Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, not Israel. He died at age 33. He ruled Jerusalem from 322 BC - In 168 BC, a successor, Antiochus Epiphines, desecrated the rebuilt Temple by slaughtering a pig on the Jewish alter. He erected a statue of the pagan god Zeus in the Holy of Holies and demand Jews worship him. As a result, Mattathias Maccabee led a revolt (Hanukkah commemorates their victory). Epiphanes was a 'type' of antichrist, a foreshadowing of the Abomination of Desolation to come.

Zachariah 9:13 When I have ... raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece ...

**Head 6 – Roman** – Defeated the Greeks in 146 BC; became a full-blown empire in 27 BC. Pax Romana lasted until 70 AD. In 67 AD Nero, dispatched Vespasian to quell the Jewish revolt. Josephus tells us he killed some 100,000 Jews. Jerusalem was sacked and temple completely destroyed by General Titus (Mat 24:1-2). Nero committed suicide, and Vespasian declared himself Emperor, leaving Titus in charge of the conquest of Jerusalem. After a seven-month siege, Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD. The Arch of Titus in Rome commemorates the destruction and death of thousands of Jews. This event begins the Diaspora (Dt. 28:64-67)

**Head 7 – Unclear** – Debated – This Empire reemerges in Last Days as the Eighth (8) and final Empire. These are often considered as possibilities for the seventh empire:

**Rome?** Commonly believed to be Rome; but it cannot be the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> empire.

**Germany, Third Reich?** Obsessed with hatred, Hitler and the Third Reich saw 6 million Jews systematically murdered. Germany never controlled Jerusalem or absorbed the domains of the six Biblical empires. Interestingly, it was out of the ashes of the Holocaust that Israel was reborn in fulfillment of prophecy.

**Seleucid Empire?** The Persian kingdom of the Macedonian dynasty

**Ottoman-Turkish Empire?** Ruled Middle-East 1517-1917; was an empire from AD 1299 to 1917. Absorbed the Roman Empire, and faded away – but, did not disappear.

**Islamic Caliphate?** Covered the same territory as the Ottoman-Turkish Empire.

### Who is the 7<sup>th</sup> King?

Revelation 17:10-11

“they are 7 kings”	1 <sup>st</sup>	- Egypt	Exo 1:1
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	- Assyria	Jer 50:17
“5 have fallen”	3 <sup>rd</sup>	- Babylon	Jer 50:17
	4 <sup>th</sup>	- Medo Persia	Dan 8:20
	5 <sup>th</sup>	- Greece	Dan 8:21
“1 is”	6 <sup>th</sup>	- Rome	Luk 19:44
“the other has not yet come, & when he does come he must remain only a little while.”	7 <sup>th</sup> ?		Rev 17:11
“the Beast that was & is not, it is an 8 <sup>th</sup> but it belongs to the 7”	8 <sup>th</sup>	- Beast “that was but is not”	Rev 17:11



## The Great Red Dragon – Kingdom 7 & 8

Every one of the first six Empires ruled the Middle East, especially Jerusalem. End-time prophecy is always **Jerusalem-centric**. Each Empire either destroyed, or **absorbed, the previous Empire**. These facts are important as we consider who the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> empire could be.

Revelation 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are **seven mountains**, on which the woman sitteth. 10 And there are **seven kings: five are fallen** (1-5: *At time of Roman Empire*), and **one is** (6: *Roman*), and the **other** (7) is **not yet come**; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11 And the **beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth** (8), and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Note that the seventh kingdom had not risen to power in John’s day. The phrase “*one is*” refers to the Roman Empire. It would seem that from the phrase “*the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth*” precludes the Roman Empire (active in John’s day) as the seventh and the Eighth.

The List of candidates for the Seventh Empire is limited to those who rose to power after the Roman Empire, and ruled Jerusalem and Israel. Chronology and continuity is important in identifying the Seventh. The first six empires were successive and without interruption; which arose one after the other, each acquiring the domain of the previous and more.

The **Roman Empire** had an interesting decline and ultimate demise. Constantine moved the capital from Rome to Byzantine Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey). The Byzantine Empire was really the extension of the Roman Empire in the east. It ultimately fell to the Ottomans in 1453. The Roman Empire spanned from 27 BC to AD 324. The Byzantine Empire lasted from AD 324 to 1453.

In prior years, Jerusalem had been conquered and re-conquered by various Muslim dynasties. In 1517 the first official Ottoman Caliph, Selim, controlled most of the Middle East, including Jerusalem and modern-day Saudi Arabia. The **Ottoman-Turkish Empire** controlled Jerusalem for the next 400 years, until the end of WW1 in 1917.

This Ottoman-Turkish Caliphate fits John's description well, for the Seventh Empire. One cannot be dogmatic in this assessment, for Scripture does not tell us specifically. But, it does seem to fit. The Eight Empire, that of the Antichrist is distinctly unique, albeit made of the some portion of the seven preceding empires.

## The **Great Red Dragon** – Seven Crowns

The Seven Crowns represent the Seven Kings who ruled these empires – Satanically Empowered Kings.

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a **great red dragon**, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and **seven crowns** upon his heads.

### Possibly:

1. **Egyptian**: Son of Ramesses (Ex 1:8-10)
2. **Assyrian**: Tilgath-Pileser (2 Kings 15:29)
3. **Babylonian**: Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1-16)
4. **Persian**: Haman (Esther 3:78-11)
5. **Grecian**: Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Dan 8:9-11)
6. **Roman**: Vespasian or Titus
7. **Unclear**: Maybe Caliph Selim
8. Antichrist

## The Great Red Dragon – Ten Horns

The Dragon had Ten Horns – these are ten noteworthy kings or leaders of nations who share a hatred for Israel, and will be inspired by the spirit of the antichrist.

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a **great red dragon**, having **seven heads** and **ten horns**, and **seven crowns** upon his heads.

There will one day be ten federated leaders, empowered by the Antichrist:

Daniel 7:23 Thus he said, The **fourth beast** shall be the fourth kingdom beast [(7) fourth from Nebuchadnezzar's reign in (3) Babylon] upon earth, which **shall be diverse from all kingdoms**, and shall **devour the whole earth**, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

24 And the **ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise**: and **another shall rise** after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall **subdue three** kings. 25 And **he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints** of the most High (*Great Tribulation*), and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until *a time and times and the dividing of time*.

Revelation 17:12 And the **ten horns** which thou sawest are **ten kings**, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the **beast**.

## The Decoder Ring to Revelation

One of the difficulties with understanding Revelation is the figurative and metaphorical references. Here is an interpretation guide:

- **The Woman** – Israel, Jewish Nation, the descendants of Abraham through Jacob
- **The Child** – Jesus Christ, the Anointed One
- **The Dragon** – Great dragon, serpent, the Devil, and Satan, the Great Red Dragon, accuser of our brethren, the power behind the Eight Empires
- **The Beast** – Empires, Seventh & Eighth Empire especially, often the antichrist
- **The Beast out of the Sea** - Eighth Empire, empire of the antichrist, Gentile nations under his authority
- **The Little Horn** (of Daniel), Composite Kingdom, the antichrist, “The man of lawlessness”

- **The Second Beast** – **False prophet**, institutes the “mark of the beast”

## The **Great Red Dragon** - Empires

So let’s recap the historical empires. The first thing we must do is correlate the various vision-prophecies of Daniel, and Revelation. These overlap one another, but not completely. Daniel’s prophecy picks up from where he was in history looking forward.

	Empire	7-Head Beast	Statue	Four Beasts	
1	<b>Egyptian</b>	Head 1			
2	<b>Assyrian</b>	Head 2			
3	<b>Babylonian</b>	Head 3	Head: Gold	Lion	<b>1</b>
4	<b>Medo-Persian</b>	Head 4	Head-Arms: Silver	Bear	<b>2</b>
5	<b>Grecian</b>	Head 5	Belly-Thighs: Bronze	Leopard	<b>3</b>
6	<b>Roman</b>	Head 6			
7	<b>Unknown</b>	Head 7	Legs: Iron	Forth Beast	<b>4</b>
8	<b>Antichrist</b>	Ten Horns	Feet: Iron-Clay	Ten Horns	<b>5</b>

Rev. 12-13, 17

Dan. 2

Dan. 7

Daniel 2:32 This image's **head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.** 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. ... 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of **brass**, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as **iron**: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the *feet and toes*, part of potters' **clay, and part of iron**, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with

miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Daniel 7:3 And **four great beasts** came up **from the sea**, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a **lion**, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a **bear**, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a **leopard**, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had **great iron teeth**: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had **ten horns**. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another **little horn**, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. 9 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

# The Great Red Dragon – Empire Territories

Notice in these maps how each successive kingdom, empire, absorbed most of the previous and grew larger. Each also controlled Israel, especially, Jerusalem.

1. Egyptian



2. Assyrian



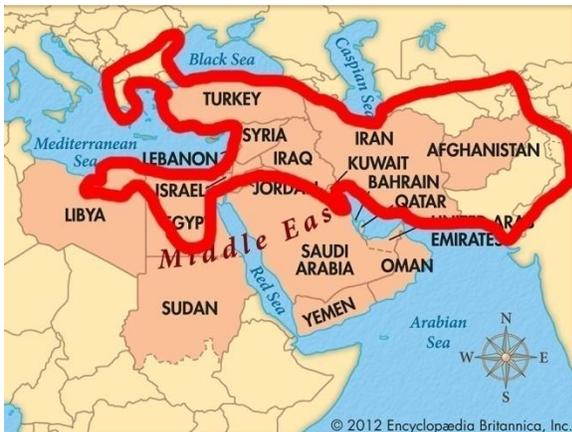
3. Babylonian



4. Medo-Persian



5. Grecian



6. Roman



## 7. Islamic Ottoman Caliphate?



## 8. Antichrist's Empire?



## The Red Dragon – The Empires are Back

50 years ago these nations, all former empires, were mostly backwater insignificant nations – today these pose the greatest danger to Israel.

In 1948 the **Woman** returned to her homeland, **Israel** is back with the most powerful army in the Middle East. She stands in the midst of those hell-bent on her destruction.

3 **Babylonian** – Modern day **Iraq**

4 **Persian** – Modern day **Iran**, 1935 became Iran

5 **Grecian** – Modern day **Syria**

6 **Roman** – Modern day **Turkey**; Constantinople was center of Eastern Roman Kingdom ... Most powerful Muslim nation today and has recently turned on Israel.

There is too much emphasis on present day Rome, Italy; the Western Seat of the Roman Empire. Remember each successive empire consumed the previous and, most importantly, controlled Jerusalem. These are today, all **Muslim** countries.

## The Beast out of the Sea - The Antichrist

This prophecy is similar in description to the Revelation 12 description of the beast, but it is specifically about the 8<sup>th</sup> Empire of the antichrist. Except, this beast has ten crowns, rather than seven in the Red Dragon imagery. This 8<sup>th</sup> Empire, the empire of the Antichrist empowered by Satan himself, will be a composite of at least three previous Empire kingdoms.

This next reference to the "beast" is similar to the previous (revelation 12), but different in that this empire will "rise up out of the sea," the gentile nations under the authority of the antichrist along with "beast out of the land" (the false prophet).

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a **beast** (*the antichrist*) rise up out of the sea (*gentile nations*), having **seven heads** (*previous empires*) and **ten horns**, and upon his horns **ten crowns**, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. (*against God*) 2 And the **beast** which I saw was **like unto a leopard**, and his feet were as the **feet of a bear**, and his mouth as the **mouth of a lion**: and the **dragon** (*Satan*) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw **one of his heads as it were wounded to death**; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the **dragon** (*Satan*) which gave power unto the **beast** (*antichrist*): and they worshipped the **beast**, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto **him** to continue forty and two months. (*The last 3-1/2 years of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.*) ... 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, (*Great Tribulation*) and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

The **Ten Horns** are ten future nations that unite in a revived final beast empire. The **Ten Crowns** are ten future empowered Kings or Leaders who submit to the antichrist.

The **Little Horn** of Daniel, from this Composite Kingdom, is a reference to the **antichrist**. (*"The man of lawlessness"*) It includes Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Grecian components – *Lion, Bear and Leopard*.

Satan will empower this beast that rises from the dead, as it were. He is a counterfeit Christ, a counterfeit resurrection, a counterfeit Messiah. Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet make up a counterfeit trinity.

### **The Mark of the Beast**

John writes about a "**second beast**" of the Apocalypse who would force people to be branded, take a mark, and made it illegal for anyone to participate in commerce without the brand.

Revelation 13:12 And **he** exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And **he** doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And **he** had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship

the image of the beast should be killed. 16 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: 17 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.** 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Those who receive the *mark of the beast* are doomed:

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and **receive his mark** in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same **shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

There is something more going on here than merely using technology to buy and sell. Having some mark which allows buying and selling is not evil in and of itself, only if there are some strings attached to getting such a mark that makes receiving it worthy of eternal damnation.

## The **Beast out of the Sea** - Who is the 7th & 8th Beast?

“**Beast**” represents a Kingdom or Empire. It is through a series of world Empires, that **Satan** (the Dragon) will wage war on God and His elect.

Daniel 2:40 Finally, there will be a **fourth kingdom** (*seventh empire*), strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so **it will crush and break all the others.**

The **Islamic Ottoman Caliphate** conquered and controlled **Babylonian** (Lion), **Medo-Persian** (Bear), **Grecian** (Leopard) territories – the Roman Empire did not. The Caliphate experienced a temporary or apparent death – a *fatal wound*. Six of the Ten Ezekiel 38-39 nations for the Gog of Magog invasion are in **modern day Turkey**; all Ten were under Islamic Caliphate rule.

The **Ottoman-Turkish Empire** succeeded the Roman Empire; it was the seat of the Islamic Caliphate until 1923. The Eastern Byzantine Roman Empire, with its Capital in **Constantinople**, continued 1,000 years after the Western portion fell – it fell to the Turks in 1453. Like the Byzantine Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire also had its capital in **Constantinople**.

Interestingly, maybe indirectly prophetic, **Tayyip Erdoğan**, President of Turkey, is bent on reestablishing the Caliphate and the Ottoman-Turkish Empire.

## Recap of the Age-old Conflict - Royal Birth

There has been an ongoing war since God's pronouncement of His plan of salvation in the Garden of Eden. It is being waged against God's divinely appointed lineage, the lineage of our Savior. First Five Kingdoms attempted to prevent Christ's birth.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his **Son**, made of a **woman**, made under the law,

Revelation 12:4b ... the **dragon** stood before the **woman** which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her **child** as soon as it was born.

Jesus, escaped Herod's death decree (Mat 2:13-16) and overcame death.

Revelation 12:5 And **she** brought forth a **man child**, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her **child** was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

## Recap of the Age-old Conflict - War in Heaven

In the last days, **Satan** will attempt to prevent **Christ's** return to Jerusalem and/or destroy the God's elect. We see this war described by John on Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:6 And the **woman** fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*. 7 And there was war in heaven: **Michael** and his angels fought against the **dragon**; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 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. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the **accuser of our brethren** is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

The **Dragon**:

- **Serpent** – Tempter of man
- **Devil** – Accuser of the Brethren
- **Satan** – Adversary of man (Often an angel of light, Roaring Lion)

Immediately before Michael, the Archangel, and his angels threw **Satan** and his demons out of heaven, Michael, the defender of Israel, was instructed to “*stand up,*” stop defending Israel. This paves the way for the Great Tribulation.

Daniel 12:1 And at that time shall **Michael** stand up, the great prince which standeth for the **children** of thy people: and there shall be a **time of trouble**, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy **people** shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

## Recap of the Age-old Conflict - War on Earth (Great Tribulation)

The devil's expulsion from Heaven initiates the **Abomination of Desolation** and the **Great Tribulation** (Mat 24:21-22; Rev 13:5-7; Jer 30:7). The devil's time is short; he has 3-1/2 years until he is bound for a thousand years.

Revelation 12:13 And when the **dragon** (*Satan*) saw that he was **cast unto the earth**, he persecuted the **woman** (*Israel in the Great Tribulation*) which brought forth the **man child**.

Revelation 13:5 And there was given unto **him** (*the antichrist*) a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue *forty and two months*. (3-1/2 years) 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto **him** (*the antichrist*) to make **war with the saints** (*Great Tribulation*), and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Daniel 7:25 And **he** (*the antichrist*) shall speak great words against the most High, and shall **wear out the saints** of the most High (*Great Tribulation*), and *think to change times and laws*: and they shall be given into his hand until *a time and times and the dividing of time*. (3-1/2 years)

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let **them** which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: ... 21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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.

Revelation 12:14 And to the **woman** were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a *time, and times, and half a time* (3-1/2 years), from the face of the **serpent**. (*Satan*) 15 And the **serpent** cast out of his mouth

water as a flood after the **woman**, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. (*The “flood” may refer to an army sent by the antichrist*)

At Jesus return, God protects the 144,000 before the Wrath of God is poured out on mankind.

Revelation 12:17 And the **dragon** was wroth with the **woman**, and **went to make war** (*Great Tribulation*) with the remnant of her **seed**, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of **Jesus Christ**.

Satan’s time is short – 3-1/2 years – His doom is sure. Thus, he sets out to destroy God’s elect. However, he will be cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Millennium for all eternity.

Revelation 20:10 And the **devil** that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the **beast** and the **false prophet** are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

## **Mystery Babylon & The Whore**

*[To be added]*

## Introducing the False Prophet

### Beast out of the Sea

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a **beast rise up out of the sea**, having **seven heads and ten horns**, and upon his horns **ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy**. 2 **And the beast which I saw was like** unto a **leopard**, and his feet were as the feet of a **bear**, and his mouth as the mouth of a **lion**: and the **dragon gave him his power**, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the **beast**. 4 And they worshipped the **dragon** which gave power unto the **beast**: and they worshipped the **beast**, saying, Who is like unto the **beast**? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto **him** a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto **him** to continue **forty and two months**. 6 And **he** opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto **him** to make war with the **saints**, and to overcome them: and power was given **him** over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 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. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the **saints**.

### False Prophet

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld **another beast** coming up out of the earth; and he had **two horns** like a lamb, and **he** spake as a **dragon**. 12 And **he** exerciseth all the power of the **first beast** before **him**, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the **first beast**, whose **deadly wound was healed**. 13 And he **doeth great wonders**, so that **he** maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which **he** had power to do in the sight of the **beast**; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the **beast**, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And **he** had power to give life unto the **image of the beast**, that the image of the **beast** should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the **beast** should be killed. 16 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: 17 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**. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the **number of a man**; and his number is **Six hundred threescore and six**.

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the **beast**, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the **beast** was taken, and with him the **false prophet** that wrought miracles before **him**, with which he deceived them that had received the **mark of the beast**, and

them that worshipped his **image**. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

## Jerusalem

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Jerusalem is strangely unique amongst the cities of the earth. Its history is divine in origin, and guaranteed a place in history until the New Earth and New Heavens. It is the “*apple of God’s eye*.” So much has happened here.

It is where David met the death angel. This is the place where Abraham was sent to sacrifice Isaac. It is the site of Solomon’s Temple; the first Temple. And, it is the site of Herod’s Temple; the Second Temple. This is where David brought the Ark of the Covenant.

Zechariah 2:7 Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. 8 For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth **the apple of his eye**. 9 For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me.

Jerusalem is the place where Jesus faced one of His three temptations. Jerusalem is where Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. This is where Jesus will set his feet upon earth at His Second Coming. This is where Jesus will rule the world for 1,000 years, as He *tabernacles* with man. It is also believed by many to be the place where God formed Adam and Eve; the location of the long lost Garden of Eden.

As far as God is concerned, Jerusalem is the center of the earth. It is the navel of the world. It is where it all began, and where it will all end. As such, Satan has a constant spiritual war swirling for the control of this Holy site. Satan himself boastfully declares that he will “*sit on*” the mount.

Isaiah 14: 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: **I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation**, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

I suspect this will occur during the Abomination of Desolation at the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Jerusalem has been leveled to the ground five times, changed hands (rule) 26 times, occupied by enemies 23 times, surrounded 52 times by various armies, and liberated 44 times. The Temple(s) have been destroyed twice. Jesus prophesied its last destruction from this within the city:

Matthew 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

This took place just as He declared some 40 years later, in 70 AD, as the Roman army destroyed the temple and the city walls. Yet, God still loves this place; He has a plan for this city. This is the stage for the events related to the end of time. (See: *Miracle that is Israel*)

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

One of the key aspects of end-time, eschatological, prophecy is that all end-time prophecy is **Jerusalem-centric**. If you lose sight of this fact, you are bound to get off track in its understanding. It is from Jerusalem that Jesus will one day rule the world; governing the physical survivors of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

## The Mount of Olives

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Like Jerusalem and the Promised Land, the land Israel partially occupies, certain places are unique in their importance to God. The Mount of Olives overlooks Jerusalem from the east. The Mount of Olives stands in an exceptional place within both past and future history of Israel.

2 Samuel 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and

all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

This first reference to the Mount of Olives notes the occasion when King David had to flee Jerusalem for his life, escaping the conspiracy of his estranged son Absalom. Just as David wept over Jerusalem as he left it, so would his greater son, Jesus, a thousand years later, weep over the city as He entered it from Mount Olivet.

Luke 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; ... 41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

It was there that He gave the great prophecy of His second coming (Matthew 24) in the Olivet Discourse. It was also there He went with His disciples after the Last Supper, and there He agonized in prayer, alone, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Mark 14:26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. ... 32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Finally, after His death and resurrection, it was from the Mount of Olives that He ascended back into heaven.

Acts 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.** 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

This is not the end of the story, however. The Mount of Olives has an amazing role yet to play in the world's future, according to a prophecy given long ago. As Jesus left, so shall He return.

Zechariah 14:1 Behold, the **day of the Lord cometh**, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. ... 4 And **his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives**, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Instead of a mountain there will become a valley in the middle of the Mount, and "*living waters shall go out from Jerusalem*" (v. 8). Instead of a mountain for weeping there will be a **stream of rejoicing**, and "*the LORD shall be king over all the earth*" (v. 9).

## The Last Trump

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The **Last Trumpet**, or **Trump of God**, announces Christ's Second Coming. This is not to be confused with the Seven Trumpet judgments of Revelation, the first seven judgments found inside the Scroll of Revelation. This Trumpet is distinct, unique and very special.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump**: for the *trumpet shall sound*, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

It is announcing Christ's Return and the Rapture of the Saints. Following on the heels of the Great Tribulation and the Cosmic Disturbances, this will be a blessed sound to those "*watching*" and waiting for Jesus return. The Rapture of the Church occurs at the "*Last Trump*."

The Mid and Post-tribulation views hold that the "*Last Trump*" is the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11, the last Trumpet Judgment. Mid-tribulationists believe this occurs in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, Post-tribulationists at the end. Yet, as we have discussed, we are "*not appointed ... to wrath*." (1 Thess. 5:9) Thus, the Last Trump and the Seventh Trumpet are two different trumpet events; otherwise, we would endure six trumpet judgments of God's wrath. Pre-tribulationists have little to say about this concept for it is hard to justify a Last Trump before the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

There are notable differences between the two trumpets – Last Trump and the Seventh Trumpet of Revelation:

- The trumpet of the church age is called the "*trump of God*" (1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump of God*: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:)
- The trumpet of Revelation is the trumpet of the seventh angel (Revelation 11:15).
- The trumpet of the church age is singular. There is no mention of a series of trumpets. The trumpet of Revelation is the seventh of seven. The phrase, last trump, has a different significance.
- In 1 Thessalonians 4, the trumpet calls the dead to life. The seventh trumpet of Revelation occurs after a resurrection occurs (Revelation 11:12).
- The trumpet of the church age comes as a blessing. The trumpet of Revelation comes with judgment and is called the third woe (Revelation 11:14).

- The trump of the church age sounds in "a moment." (1 Corinthians 15:52). The seventh trumpet of Revelation can be interpreted to possibly sound for "days" (Revelation 10:7).

There is no discernible connection between the "Last Trump" and the Seventh Trumpet, aside from the instrument – a trumpet.

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians was explaining this concept approximately thirty years before John wrote the book of Revelation. Thus, the concept of the *Last Trump* was to be understood without knowledge of Revelation.

There are a few other related concepts that shed light on possible deeper meaning of this 'Last Trump.'

**End of the Church Age:** It seems that the Last Trump could be the Last Trump of this age, the Church Age. It announces the return of Christ, the removal of the Church ending the Church Age, and impending judgment. During judgment more trumpets will follow during God's Wrath/Judgment, after the Church is removed.

**Last in a Familiar Series:** A possible meaning of the Last Trump is to take it as *last* in a series. Consider the series of shofars/trumpets that had to be sounded in the wilderness to move the Israelites from one place to another. Numbers 10:5-6 describes this procedure. An initial blast would signal, for example, to pack up their belongings. Later, there would be a shofar to signal it was time for the twelve tribes to line up. The Last Trump of that series would signal that it was time to 'move out.'

Paul's reference to the 'Last Trumpet' would match this process. It would also perhaps be familiar to Paul's readers in Corinth, since Paul had just detailed a number of events in Israel's wilderness journeying in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. Paul's conclusion in that section was that these things happened to Israel "*for examples*" and were written for "*our admonition*" (1 Cor. 10:11) "*upon whom the ends of the world are come.*"

Thus, the last trump appears to be a reference, as in Israel's wilderness wanderings, to the 'move out' shofar. Not unlike Paul, this would be a unique literary way to refer to the divine shofar/trumpet blast at the rapture when millions of living saints will suddenly and miraculously be called to 'move out.' The last trump indicated that the entire congregation was now on the move.

**God's Presence:** Additionally, just as a divine trumpet blast signaled God's presence at Sinai, so also God's trumpet will declare Christ's coming.

Exodus 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

**Liberty:** Even as human trumpets sounded in Leviticus 25 on the *jubilee*, so God's trumpet call will proclaim *liberty* for his saints as they are delivered from the restraints of death and sin in this world by being caught up "*in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*" (1 Thess. 4:17).

**Call to War and Assembly:** Likewise, throughout Jewish history, the Trumpet was used as a *call to war*. It was also used to call a *solemn assembly*. In this case, Jesus is assembling His saints, as he heads to war.

We see the Trumpet referenced throughout Scripture announcing the Day of the Lord – when Christ gathers His Elect and pours out God's wrath.

Joel 2:1 **Blow ye the trumpet** in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: **for the day of the Lord cometh**, for it is nigh at hand;

Zephaniah 1:14 The great **day of the Lord** is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the **day of the Lord**: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. 15 That day is a **day of wrath**, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 A **day of the trumpet** and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.

Thus, it would seem that the Seven Trumpets of Revelation are all related to God's judgment and wrath. While, this Last Trump, is a call for God's saints to assemble.

Interestingly, the Jews have practiced prophecy of this day for 4,000 years during their annual Seven Feasts of the Lord. The fifth feast, the Feast of Trumpets, is the beginning of the last three feasts, all related to foretelling Christ's second coming.

## Feast of Trumpets

The **Trumpet** was used to: 1) Call a solemn **assembly**, 2) call to **war** or in the event of an attack. The **Day of the Lord** begins with the blowing of the Trumpet – blown by Jesus, or His angels – it announces the **Rapture**.

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days (the **Fifth Seal**) 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: (the **Sixth Seal**) 30 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. 31 And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall **gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.



1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**, 52 In a moment, in the *twinkling of an eye*, **at the last trump**: for the **trumpet shall sound**, and the *dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I would **not have you to be ignorant**, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that **we which are alive** and remain unto the **coming of the Lord** shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For **the Lord himself shall descend** from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first*. 17 Then *we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together* with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This first of the Fall Feasts, Depicts the **coming of the Messiah** (*Day of the Lord*) to '**Rapture**' the Church (*both Jew and Gentile in Christ*) and then to judge the wicked; the Rapture immediately **precedes the Wrath of God**.

Many believe that the Day of the Lord – the Rapture will occur in September or October of some future year, during The Jewish Feast of Trumpets. This is mere speculation.

**Israel and the Church (saved Jew and Gentile) are distinct entities.** The Church is not Israel. Israel is not the Church. There are clear promises made to both. However, there is a **contiguous relationship between the two**.

**Every blessing the Church enjoys** comes from the covenants made with Israel. We are **grafted in** by the grace of God.

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ... 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree (Israel), wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 **Boast not against the branches.** But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, **The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.** 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and **thou standest by faith.** Be **not highminded, but fear:** 21 For **if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.**

Since this feast (Trumpets) comes on the day of the **New Moon**, a faint crescent that could easily be obscured by clouds, **Watchfulness** is a critical ingredient. The parallel admonitions for the saints to be watchful are interesting.

Matthew 24:42 **Watch** therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us **watch** and be sober.

Titus 2:13 **Looking for** that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that **look for** him shall **he appear the second time** without sin unto salvation.

2 Peter 3:12 **Looking for** and hasting unto the coming of the **day of God**, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (**Sixth Seal**) 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, **look for** new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye **look for** such things, be **diligent** that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.



**Two Witnesses** were required to confirm the New Moon. Likewise, Two Witnesses will come before the Return of Christ. This is another interesting parallel to the Two Witnesses who appear before the Day of the Lord.

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

One last concept having to do with the Trumpet is that the **Seventh Trumpet** of the Seven Trumpet judgments of God announces Christ victory and the coming Millennial Reign ... the last Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles.

Revelation 11:15 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. ... 17 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.

The Lord's Prayer is about to be fulfilled, answered in full on earth.

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

## Jesus Return to Israel

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Keep your eyes on Zion, God's holy land. As the Jew goes, so goes the world.

Prophecy is "*pre-written history*." From the Mount of Olives Jesus spoke of His Second Coming. From the Mount of Olives Jesus ascended. And to the Mount of Olives He will return; His feet will first touch down upon the Mount of Olives.

Israel's history is a typological framework for future prophetic events. At the Abomination of Desolation, Jesus warns Jews to flee into the wilderness. There God promises to protect them for 42 months, until the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

After the Rapture, after the judgment on the nations, He leads His people (Jews) back to Jerusalem from the wilderness where they had fled after the Abomination of Desolation.

Interestingly, Jesus returns to Israel and Jerusalem in the same way Israel did in their exodus from Egypt – had they not disobeyed and wandered for 40 years, that is. Hear the words of Moses as he prophesies this event:

Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said, **The Lord (Jesus) came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir** unto them; he **shined forth from mount Paran**, and **he came with ten thousands of saints**: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. 3 Yea, he loved the people; **all his saints are in thy hand**: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. 4 Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. 5 And he was **king in Jeshurun**, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

Mount Sinai, Seir, and Mount Paran are the three locations that God progressively revealed Himself. It is a near and far term prophecy; first Moses historically receiving the Law, and finally, the future gathering of the Jews from the wilderness where they have fled.

Jesus will be the final Lawgiver and Judge. He will be the second and final Moses. Moses, in this passage, is both Moses himself and a codeword for the Messiah, just like David was a type of Christ.

God will again reveal Himself in the wilderness in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel, like He did to the Israelites. He comes with His angels and saints to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem. They retrace the path of the exodus.

Deuteronomy 33:26 There is **none like unto the God of Jeshurun**, who **rideth upon the heaven in thy help**, and in his excellency on the sky. 27 The **eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms**: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. 28 **Israel then shall dwell in safety alone**: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

“Deuteronomy must be read as future prophecy, using Israel’s past history as a typological backdrop or framework.” (*Travis Snow*) We see this theme repeated in subsequent prophets.

Hosea 2:14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and **bring her into the wilderness**, and speak comfortably unto her. 15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and **she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt**.

Micah 7:15 **According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things**. 16 The nations shall see

and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. 17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.

“Israel’s past is a window to Israel’s future,” **Travis Snow** points out. He says that “the original conquest of “the Land,” was a precursor to what will take place when Jesus returns.”

**John Sailhamer**, in *‘The Meaning of the Pentateuch,’* declares that Deuteronomy 33 looks forward to a future King.

Habakkuk 3:3 God came from Teman, and the **Holy One from mount Paran**. Selah. **His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.** 4 **And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.** 5 **Before him went the pestilence,** and burning coals went forth at his feet. 6 He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. 8 Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? 9 **Thy bow was made quite naked,** according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. 11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: **at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.** 12 **Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.** 13 **Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed;** thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah. 14 Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages: they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly. 15 Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses, through the heap of great waters.

Habakkuk is expanding on the prophecies of Jesus’ second coming in the Torah.

I find this interesting. It does not change anything particularly. But, it adds a greater understanding of how the events in the end-time will unfold.

## Apostasy – Avoiding Deception

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Deception will be a hallmark of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. The devil will attempt to deceive “*even the Elect.*” For those who have lived their lives without the “*love of the truth,*” they will be deceived.

“The falling away will be characterized, not by a rejection of Jesus, but by a distortion of Jesus. He would be portrayed as a means to self-fulfillment rather than as the end and goal of life.” - Dr. Eddie Hyatt

In fact, they will be locked into deception by God Himself. He will “*send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.*” This will cause a notable “*falling away*” from the Truth, from the faith in God.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by **the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye **be not soon shaken in mind**, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let **no man deceive you** by any means: for **that day** shall not come, *except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed*, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ... 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now **letteth** will let, until he be **taken out of the way**. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose **coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders**, 10 And with all **deceivableness of unrighteousness** in them that perish; ***because they received not the love of the truth***, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion**, that they should **believe a lie**: 12 That they all **might be damned** who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

I suggest we seek the Truth. Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “*He will lead [us] into all truth.*” However, we must be willing; we must seek and accept the Holy Spirit’s guidance. We must practice God-given discernment.

Many in the last days, including the Elect (*or, rather Saints; See: Early Beliefs – Facing the Antichrist*) it would appear, will be deceived and follow the antichrist. Those who do, those who take his mark, will lose their place in the Lamb’s Book of Life. This final demonic attempt at deception will be for all the marbles, as they say.

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark** in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:11 And the smoke of their **torment** ascendeth up **for ever** and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, **who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.**

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved.

## Mark of the Beast

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The proverbial Mark of the Beast causes Christians to wildly speculate as to exactly what the Mark is.

Revelation 13:16 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: 17 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. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

There is endless conjecture. Is it a barcode, a QR code, a chip under the skin, a nano-dot tattoo, a quantum dot injection, an AI brain implant, or something else? Regardless, it is a serious matter.

“Satan is aflame with desire for unlimited dominion over the human family.” – *AW Tozer*

For, if a Christian takes the Mark they are then destined for Hell, it would seem from Scripture. They will not ‘*collect two hundred dollars as they pass Go;*’ they go straight to ‘*jail,*’ as it were. It is non-trivial. Discernment, knowledge of the Truth, and confidence in God will be required to resist.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the **souls** of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and **which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads**, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But **the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished**. This is the first resurrection.

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark** in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The **same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God**, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; **and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11 And **the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever** and

ever: and *they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

To be fair, it is important to note that there is only one unforgivable sin mentioned in scripture. However, I would not recommend the eternal risk – it could be for all the marbles.

Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the **blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven** unto men.<sup>32</sup> And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

However, taking the “*mark of the Beast*” appears to be irreversible.

Revelation 16:1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the **wrath of God** upon the earth. 2 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.

Its temptation will likely be exceptionally strong. For we will not be able to “*buy or sell,*” or continue on with life as normal, without the Mark. I suspect that the financial assets will be frozen for those who refuse. They may lose their bank accounts, and their homes and vehicles as a result. They will not be able to buy food and other provisions. Those will be dark days.

As a side note, we see the potential groundwork being laid in the WEF Great Reset, UN ID2020, and Rockefeller’s Lockstep program. Globalists knew their mandated injections and other restrictions would lead to worldwide uprisings and civil unrest. They predicted it in the 2010 Rockefeller document Lockstep. How to handle these uprisings was discussed and rehearsed ahead of time – “*label them as criminals and shut down their finances.*” Just look to Canada.

The forthcoming **Great Tribulation**, the fifth seal, will be terrible times for mankind. As a result, many will fall away from their faith. Many will succumb to the pressure to continue with life unabated, or even merely to survive. Yet, Jesus warns and encourages us in the same passage. It will be very severe, but He will return in short order for those who endure.

Matthew 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And **ye shall be hated of all men** for my name's sake: but ***he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*** 23

But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, **Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.**

But, the Mark portends something more. It is essentially a badge of allegiance with the antichrist. I believe that the deception surrounding the Mark will be alluring; as it will be with the antichrist himself ("*an angel of light*"). I doubt that the antichrist will reveal his evil intentions; they will be cloaked in deception, even "*righteousness.*" Mark Blitz gives a compelling warning for taking this too lightly:

"Christians have a **false sense of confidence that they will never take the mark of the beast.** The mark the Antichrist chooses, will be extremely enticing. ...

It [may] be something that will let you access the internet with your thoughts (*think Metaverse*). So I think people will be deceived because they're going to be passionate about the things of this world. ... Artificial intelligence will likely play a huge role in creating the mark of the beast ...

But what was interesting is that [Paul] said **they came out from among us** (1 John 2:19), as if they were a type of professing Christian. And Paul says **Satan comes as an angel of light** and **his ministers are ministers of righteousness.** ... He wants to come across as a believer, which will be very deceptive." – *Pastor Mark Biltz (Stephen Strang Interview)*

1 John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that **antichrist** shall come, even **now** are there **many antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 **They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us,** they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Here are a number of things to note about the mark of the beast:

1. Having the mark of the beast will be the only way a person will be able to openly and publicly buy, sell, and do business when the Antichrist will rule the world (Revelation 13:16-17).
2. This mark could be a stamp, seal, image, microchip, or transponder. It will be specifically related to the name or number (666) of the beast, the Antichrist (Revelation 13:18).
3. People will receive this mark of the beast after the midpoint of Daniel's 70th Week, when this beast, the Antichrist, and a second beast, the False Prophet, will be in power (Revelation 13:5, 11).

4. If a Christian takes the mark of the beast, they have sealed their doom. (Ephesians 1:13-14).
5. Not all will receive the mark of the beast, for some will be saved during the “Great Tribulation.” (Matthew 24:9-27; Revelation 12:13-17).
6. People taking the mark of the beast will not make some naïve, unintended, or careless decision. Though deceived, these unbelievers will know what they are doing, and will agree with the Antichrist, his beliefs, his rule, and his purpose for the mark (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).
7. Taking the mark of the beast will be both a financial and spiritual decision. The individual receiving the mark will pledge allegiance to the Antichrist, and will put their faith in this evil and despicable man: “They worshiped the beast” (Revelation 13:4).
8. Those taking the mark of the beast will not be able to reverse their decision. Once marked, their future will be set, for they will forever be punished in the lake of fire: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand ... and ... will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb” (Revelation 14:9-10).

### **A Potential Scenario of What’s Coming**

We are conceivably living in the end-times, and when we look at the state of the world, it would seem that we are rapidly moving toward that time when this mark of the beast will be a reality.

For more than a century we have heard that leaders and countries have been pushing for a one-world order and global economy. We see it with the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, World Economic Forum, and the International Money Fund.

There will likely be more open borders, less autonomy, and more interdependence with regard to the countries of the world. On the individual level, people will want their bank accounts to be more secure, and their financial transactions to be simpler and safer.

Here’s a scenario of what could happen. A sophisticated system could soon be in place for the Antichrist and his associate (the beast out of the earth, Revelation 13:11) to manage this global economy, utilizing the mark of the beast. Governing the entire world, having a universal monetary system, and overseeing billions of financial transactions will require an ingenious and complex technology.

We are beginning to see how this mark of the beast will be a key component in tomorrow's world. In fact, it is routine for pets to get implanted microchips, and now it's beginning to happen with people.

In Sweden, many individuals receive surgically inserted microchips for their business dealings and other activities (Washington Post, 4/4/2017). In the near future we will become a cashless and checkless society, our credit and debit cards will be gone, and the technology to implement the mark of the beast will be fully developed and operational.

**Central Bank Digital Currencies** - Over the past couple of years, central banks have openly discussed the introduction Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs). The central banks wield power over some of the largest economies in the world - the United Kingdom, Canada, China, the European Union, and the United States. Despite these public discussions, conventional wisdom says the rollout of CBDCs remains years in the future. The conventional wisdom is wrong. China has already released a digital yuan, and recently released digital yuan wallets for both Android and iOS smartphones.

In March, President Biden signed an Executive Order titled "*Ensuring Responsible Development of Digital Assets*." The order requires federal agencies to submit to the President within 180 days:

"a technical evaluation of the technological infrastructure, capacity, and expertise that would be necessary at relevant agencies to facilitate and support the introduction of a CBDC system should one be proposed. The evaluation should specifically address the technical risks of the various designs, including with respect to emerging and future technological developments, such as quantum computing."

By September 2022, this technical evaluation will be complete. Then, once the next crisis hits, the U.S. will likely roll out its own CBDC to replace the dollar.

Why does this matter? CBDCs will be centralized, government-controlled programmable currency. This means if the government decides it doesn't like you for whatever reason (think Canadian truckers), they can cut off your access. In other words, you won't be able to buy or sell. Sound familiar? The Bible says the Antichrist will implement this same system. Those who refuse the mark of the beast will be unable to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17). We're now on the verge of a global rollout of a technology identical in ability to the mark of the beast technology the Bible says will dominate the world during the Tribulation.

Jesus gave us clear instructions:

Revelation 14:12 Here is the **patience of the saints**: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Luke 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 **Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things** that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

## A Last Warning – Falling Away

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Some claim that the Holy Spirit will stop, not allow, or prevent one from taking the Mark of the Beast. I believe that this is the height of arrogance and presumption. My experience is that the Holy Spirit graciously warns us, convicts us, and encourages us not to sin. But, He never stops us, forces us, or prevents us from sin.

The mark of the beast is the one sin that, it seems, cannot be repented of – it is for all eternity; it is a permanent decision. The devil will, however, be unrelenting in his pressure to take the Mark.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was **given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them:** and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and **shall wear out the saints of the most High,** and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Timothy warns that many will depart from the faith in the “*latter times.*” Keep in mind that they had to be *of the faith* in order to depart from it. Thus, he is speaking to you and me.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that **in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,** giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Furthermore, Paul warns that there will be a “*falling away*” in the last days. Note, once again, they cannot *fall away from* something they are not part of. In other words, these are dire warning that many will fall from, give up, and turn away from the faith.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come **a falling away** first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

It would seem quite clear that these warning are to us, the Saints. Thus, it is possible for the Saints to fall away. [See: Early Beliefs – The Elect] Yet, we are called to endure to the end – the Rapture.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the **patience of the saints**: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**

The American Church is ripe for deception. The First Horseman of the Apocalypse is the antichrist. He will come with “signs and lying wonders.” However, the American Church with its Pre-Tribulation doctrine is expecting Christ to come first. Can you see the deception being set up?

## Replacement Theology

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There is a school of thought known as Replacement Theology (often called *Supersessionism*). It believes that Israel has been replaced (*superseded*) by the Church. It dismisses the role of Israel in end-time prophecy; making Israel irrelevant in God's plan. It is an outworking, an extension, of *allegorical post-millennial eschatology*.

Yet, Paul takes the whole chapters of Romans 9-11 to define God's eternal purposes for Israel. It ends with the declaration that “*His gifts and calling are irrevocable.*” As I have stated throughout this document, all eschatological prophecy is *Jerusalem-centric*. Without Israel, huge swaths of prophecy quite literally make no sense whatsoever – no matter how much you twist it. Israel and the Jews have not been replaced.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

His promises to Israel were confirmed with the coming of Jesus, rather than canceled. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with prophecies for Israel, the Nation, that are yet to be fulfilled. They have not been annulled. Jesus will return one day to Jerusalem and will rule and reign from there, just as prophesied.

Zechariah 14:4 And **his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives**, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, **a Lamb stood on the mount Sion**, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Jeremiah 3:17 At that time **they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord**; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

Matthew 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

God has made immutable promises to Abraham and his seed that extend forever. The land they occupy now is clearly theirs according to God's plan and promises.

Genesis 13:15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16 And **I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth**: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

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: ...

Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And **I will make of thee a great nation**, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for **an everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee ...19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Genesis 35:12 And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and **to thy seed after thee (Jacob) will I give the land.**

The Jews scattering "*among the heathen (nations)*," that began as the Diaspora in 70 AD, was prophesied. And, so was their re-gathering:

Jeremiah 23:8 But, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and **they shall dwell in their own land.**

Jeremiah 30:3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that ... **I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers,** and they shall possess it.

Jeremiah 31:10 Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, **He that scattered Israel will gather him,** and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Isaiah 11:11-12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people** ... and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 43:5 Fear not: for I am with thee: **I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;** 6 I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Ezekiel 34:12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will **I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered** in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will **bring them to their own land** ...

Ezekiel 37:11 Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. ... 21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, **I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:** 22 And I will make them one nation ... 25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein ... my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Ezekiel 36:24 For **I will take you from among the heathen**, and gather you out of all countries, and will **bring you into your own land**. ... 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Hosea 3:4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: 5 **Afterward shall the children of Israel return**, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled**.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: (Quoting: Isaiah 50:20) 27 **For this is my covenant unto them**, when I shall take away their sins.

Can it be any clearer?

“I think we do not attach sufficient **importance to the restoration of the Jews**. We do not think enough about it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that **there is to be an actual restoration of the Children of Israel** . . . For when the Jews are restored, the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in; and as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion with his ancients gloriously, and the halcyon days of the millennium shall then dawn; we shall then know every man to be a brother and a friend; Christ shall rule with universal sway.” - *Charles Spurgeon*

"Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in Romans 11." - *Jonathan Edwards*

**“God still wants to complete with the Jews the plan for redeeming the world** ... This is why God has preserved ... a sacred remnant of Israel ... the chosen people.” - *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

And God promised not to ever reject (replace) them.

“You, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, Descendant of Abraham My friend, you whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,

and called from its remotest parts and said to you, 'You are My servant, **I have chosen you and not rejected you.**' (Isaiah 41:9)

Thus, if Replacement Theology is correct, then God could not be trusted because of all the promises that would be voided.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**  
32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

This erroneous, if not heretical, replacement doctrine leads to Anti-Zionism and rabidly Anti-Semitic attitudes. May I remind you, we Gentiles have been "*grafted in*" by the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all **baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Romans 11:11 ... salvation is come unto the Gentiles ... 18 Boast not against the [natural] branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be **grafted in**. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded (conceited), but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness (kindness): otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Furthermore, we Christians are spiritual Jews:

Galatians 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are **ye Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

Romans 4:12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the **steps of that faith of our father Abraham**, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

From the first century on, even the Church has been contributing to anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jew; many believe that because Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah,

that God has corporately rejected her. This nonsense has been endorsed even by the Reformers. As a result, today, worldwide anti-Semitism is at its highest level.

“One of the results of the Church’s ignorance of Israel’s role in the plan of God is the profound blindness of much of the Church concerning unfolding prophecy ... been defaced with errant doctrines of a Gentile-dominated church.” – *When a Jew Rules the World*, Joel Richardson

Thank God Israel rejected the messiah. For, if she had not, we would be still dead in our sin. Israel will face the full brunt of the culmination of Satan’s full rage against God’s plan to restore the Nation of Israel:

Jeremiah 30:7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the **time of Jacob's trouble**, but he shall be saved out of it.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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.

Yet, in spite of clear prophecy, many question Israel’s right to exist, nullifying God’s clear promises, replacing them with the Church. Anti-Semitism is a result of this twisted narrative. Oddly, if you hate Jews, you hate yourself. If you despise Israel, you despise the “*apple of God’s eye*.”

Zechariah 2:8 For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth **the apple of his eye**.

Jesus was a Jew – not an Arab nor a Palestinian – for if He wasn’t a Jew His atonement is of no effect and we are still dead in our sin. God forbid! Joel Richardson says, “*If your eschatology does not culminate with a Jew ruling the world from Jerusalem, your eschatology is wrong.*” Amen!

“You can’t love God without loving the Jewish people” - *Corrie Ten Boom*

Genesis 12:3 And **I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee**: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

And Jesus remains a Jew even in his glorified body. Jesus — in His glorified body — is still the “*Lion of the tribe of Judah*” (Rev. 5:5). The very last words of Jesus in the Bible, often standing out in red letters, are: “*I, Jesus . . . am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star*” (Rev. 22:16).

## **Is Israel Cutoff?**

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It is often hard to comprehend that Israel, God's chosen people to bring salvation to the world, would have rejected Jesus. It is equally hard to understand that God would not cut them off, as it were, and annul His promises to them. But, He has not.

There is more to the story. Replacement Theology proponents refuse to see it. So, how did Israel miss Jesus first coming? Was it their fault? Not necessarily. You see Isaiah prophesied that God would bring a 'spiritual blindness' in part.

Isaiah 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and **see ye indeed, but perceive not.** 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and **make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,** and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

What an interesting prophecy. Why would God blind His people? In part, it would appear to ensure that the crucifixion of Christ would occur. Thus, Israel (today and in Jesus' day) is not blind because they rejected Jesus. But, rather they rejected Christ because they were already blinded in part. Thank God that they did, or we would be destined for Hell, had Jesus not gone to the cross for us.

1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the **hidden wisdom**, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: **for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.** ... 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Thus, the blindness of Israel was the cause of the rejection of Jesus. Their unbelief was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Paul clarifies this:

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; **that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**

The "*fulness of the Gentiles*" will conclude at Christ's second coming. Thus, this "*blindness in part*" will last until then. At that time Israel's "blindness" will cease.

Matthew 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, **till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

John 19:37 And again another scripture saith, **They shall look on him whom they pierced.**

Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and **they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.** Even so, Amen.

Many have determined that because Israel rejected Jesus, God has rejected them. Nothing could be furtherer from the truth. (See: *Replacement Theology*) As I have said repeatedly, Israel has a key role in the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel and all end-time prophecy. Without Israel, huge swaths of prophecy are meaningless.

God has not rejected Israel. They remain the “*apple of His eye.*” World history will culminate in Israel and, especially, Jerusalem. None of God’s promises to Israel have been annulled. Isaiah prophecies this and Paul makes this clear:

Isaiah 62:3 Thou [Israel] shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

Isaiah 46:13 ... I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

Romans 11:2 **God hath not cast away his people** which he foreknew. ...

If God does not keep His word to Israel, He is not true. Speaking to Jacob, Israel, go promised:

Genesis 28:15 And, behold, I am with thee, and **will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land;** for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

So, not until Jesus returns at the end of the age, will Israel’s “blindness” be completely lifted. The blindness had a purpose in God plan of redemption.

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather **through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,** for to provoke them to jealousy.

Then, at that time, Zechariah’s prophecy will be fulfilled:

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn**

**for him**, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

And then shall salvation come to all Israel:

Romans 11:26 And so **all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Sadly, Israel will pay a heavy price for their disobedience through the ages. Zechariah tells us that only one-third of Israel will survive the Great Tribulation and the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the **third shall be left** therein.

This small remnant, along with previously saved Jews, will be the ones through which God will fulfill His Old Testament promises to Israel in the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. Thus, we should join Paul in his prayer:

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

## Dispensationalism – Israel & the Church

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One of the tenants of Dispensationalism, especially the Pre-Tribulational Rapture position, is that a sharp distinction must be made between Israel and the Church. This camp believes that God does not work with Israel and the Church at the same time. Thus, the various dispensations: one for Israel, and one for the Church.

They believe that the Church, the body of believers, will be taken from the earth before God deals with Israel, in what they call the “*tribulation period*.” It is an intentionally deceptive term; one I will not use. Scripture is clear that God will fulfill his national and territorial promises to Israel when Jesus returns. As you will see elsewhere in this document, national Israel is a distinct entity in the end-times events.

Moreover, it is equally clear from the Bible, that God works out His purposes with Israel and the Church simultaneously. God is working with Israel during the present Church Age. Case in point is the restoration of Israel to their homeland in our day. Conversely, at Jesus first coming, He extended grace to the Gentiles, while continuing to work with Israel.

Since God has clearly worked with Israel and the Church together in the past, there is no reason to expect Him to do differently in the future. The Church will be present with national and ethnic Israel during much of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a **new covenant with the house of Israel**, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

God promised to make a “new covenant” with Israel (not the Church) in this Old Testament prophecy of Jeremiah. But, we learn in the New Testament that certain benefits have been extended to the Church, the Gentile Church, though they were not part of Israel. Dispensationalism, if it were consistent with hermeneutics would have to insist that the Church cannot exist on earth, since it was promised to Israel. But, it was.

Prophecies throughout the Old Testament have to do with fulfillment in both the Church and Israel. Consider Joel's famous prophecy:

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that **I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh**; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.

This prophecy began to be fulfilled with the Church in Acts 2:16-21. Peter quotes the Old Testament prophecy, originally given to Israel, and extends it to the Church. This is the beginning of the Church Age. The new Church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles.

Here the Church is not "*replacing*" Israel. Peter does not view the prophecy as being completely fulfilled at Pentecost. It is bookends for the Church – Pentecost and the Cosmic Disturbances announcing Christ's Second Coming.

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus prophesied the destruction of Israel in 70 AD during the Old Covenant "dispensation" (before the cross). But, the judgment, the destruction, occurred during the Church Age after Pentecost.

The ecclesiastical presupposition of Pre-Tribulational eschatology that the Church must be removed before the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel is invalidated in just these three examples. The Old Testament, Old Covenant, prophecies have had fulfillment in the Church Age. God deals with Israel and the Church simultaneously. Hence, the Church does not have to be removed prior to God's final dealing with Israel.

## Prophecy – Restoration of Israel

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1. The house of Israel will be gathered from among the heathen (the Gentiles) and returned to their own land (see Ezekiel 36:24; 37:21).

Ezekiel 20:34 And I will bring you out from the people, and **will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered**, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

Ezekiel 39:28 Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have **gathered them unto their own land**, and have left none of them any more there.

Isaiah 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and **gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth**.

Isaiah 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again **the second time to recover the remnant of his people**, which shall be left ...12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall **assemble the outcasts of Israel**, and gather together the dispersed of Judah **from the four corners of the earth**.

2. The land of Israel will be rebuilt and re-inhabited by the covenant people (see Ezekiel 36:10–12, 33–36).
3. The land will become highly productive and fruitful, even like the Garden of Eden (see Ezekiel 36:8, 29–30, 34–35).
4. There will be one nation in the land of Israel again (see Ezekiel 37:22).
5. Jerusalem will be reestablished as the capital city of the Israelites (see Zechariah 1:16–17; 2:12; 12:6; 3 Nephi 20:46).
6. Judah will become powerful in politics and warfare (see Isaiah 19:16–17; Zechariah 10:3, 5–6).

In fact, God fulfilled in whole or in part seven end-time prophecies during the 20th Century.

1. The regathering of the Jewish people to their homeland (Isaiah 11:10-12 and Ezekiel 36:22-28).
2. The re-establishment of the state of Israel (Isaiah 66:7-8, Ezekiel 37:21-22 and Zechariah 12:2-3).
3. The reclamation of the land of Israel (Isaiah 35:1-2,7 and Ezekiel 36:35).
4. The revival of the Hebrew language (Zephaniah 3:9 and Jeremiah 31:23).
5. The re-occupation of the city of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:1-3 and Luke 21:24).
6. The resurgence of the Israeli military (Zechariah 12:6,8 and Isaiah 41:15).
7. The refocusing of world politics on Israel (Zechariah 12:3 and 14:1-9).

## Promises to Israel

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Genesis 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And **I will make of thee a great nation**, and **I will bless thee**, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Genesis 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the **stars**, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, **So shall thy seed be.**

Genesis 17:8 **And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession;** and I will be their God.

Zechariah 2:8 For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth **the apple of his eye.**

## Chosen

Deuteronomy 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy **God hath chosen thee** to be **a special people** unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

Psalms 105:6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob **his chosen**.

Isaiah 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom **I have chosen**

## Purpose

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be **a peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and **an holy nation**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Isaiah 43:10 Ye are **my witnesses**, saith the Lord, and **my servant** whom **I have chosen**: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

## Blessed

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have **redeemed thee**, I have **called thee** by thy name; **thou art mine**.

Isaiah 61:9 And their seed shall be **known among the Gentiles**, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the **Lord hath blessed**.

Isaiah 62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, 7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he **make Jerusalem a praise in the earth**.

## Protected

Isaiah 41:11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and **they that strive with thee shall perish**.

Jeremiah 31:35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

### **Above Nations**

Deuteronomy 10:15 Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he **chose their seed** after them, even you **above all people**, as it is this day.

Isaiah 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and **all nations shall flow unto it**. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

### **Not Rejected**

Isaiah 41:9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; **I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away**.

Romans 11:1 I say then, **Hath God cast away his people? God forbid**. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

### **Redeemed & Restored**

Psalms 130:7 Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous **redemption**. 8 And **he shall redeem Israel** from all his iniquities.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so **all Israel shall be saved**: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is **my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins**.

## Battle of Armageddon

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Armageddon is a battle even non-Christians know of. The term is used commonly in the English language. However, few have details correct. It is the culmination of Christ's judgment of the earthly nations.

The Biblical sequence of events is:

- Rapture of the Saints following the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal,
- Trumpet and Bowl judgments on the nations following the 7<sup>th</sup> Seal,
- Seventh Trumpet announcing the establishment of Jesus' earthly kingdom, and
- Then the Battle of Armageddon.

At the Seventh Trumpet, the world is declared to belong to Jesus.

Revelation 11:15 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.

The Sixth Bowl prepares for the Battle of Armageddon. Following the Trumpet and Bowl judgments, the nations are enraged and gather themselves to fight Jesus.

Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry ...

They leaders of the nations gather in Armageddon "*to make war against Him that sat on the horse.*"

Revelation 19:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together **to make war against him that sat on the horse**, and against his army.

Jesus and His armies attack them at Armageddon.

Revelation 19:11 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**. 12 His eyes were as a

flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it **he should smite the nations**: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Jesus wins, of course. Armageddon concludes the Day of the Lord; it is the culmination and completion of God's wrath.

## Angel Armies

Revelation 19:14 And the **armies which were in heaven** followed him **upon white horses**, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

One of the misunderstood topics related to the Battle of Armageddon is the beliefs that we come with Jesus on white horse to fight the battle. It seems that most of the time when scripture talks about armies associated with God, it's **talking about angelic armies**. It is a conflagration of Scripture leading to the misunderstanding.

Jude 14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with **ten thousands of his saints**, 15 To execute judgment ...

Jude, quoting Enoch, lets us know that these are armies of His saints – I believe angels.

Zechariah 14:5 ... the Lord my God shall come, and all the **saints** with thee.

The word "saints" equates to holy ones, i.e. **angels** as in Job 5:1, Ps. 89:5 and 7, Dan. 4:13 and 8:13, Matt. 24:31, 25:31 and Jude 14. As in this verse from Daniel:

Daniel 8:13 Then I heard one **saint** speaking, and another **saint** said unto that certain **saint** which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

These are clearly *angels*. This understanding is confirmed by Jesus and Paul:

Matthew 25:31 When the **Son of man shall come** in his glory, **and all the holy angels with him**, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, **when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**

2 Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, **when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,** 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Mark 13: 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then **shall he send his angels,** and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

John speaks in rather vague terms in Revelation regarding those who come with Christ to the Battle of Armageddon:

Revelation 17:14 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.**

Revelation 19:14 And the **armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

I will readily admit that the description for them and their attire, is strikingly similar to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb:

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the **marriage of the Lamb** is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be **arrayed in fine linen, clean and white:** for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

When Paul is comforting the Thessalonians, he speaks of Jesus returning with the saints. Here, I believe, He is referring to the either the 'dead in Christ.'

1 Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the **coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.**

While I cannot be dogmatic, I believe it is angelic armies who fight with Jesus at the Battle of Armageddon. This fits so many other examples in the Bible where angels fought on behalf of God's people, as with David when he was instructed to "*wait until you hear the sound of marching in the leaves of the trees.*"



## The Third Temple

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“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.”  
(Exodus 25:8; see also Exodus 40:34–35 and 1 Kings 8:11)

Some get lost in the concept that we, as Christians, do not need a Temple or the Jewish sacrificial system. And we do not. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice and has, in fact, atoned for our sin once and for all. However, the faithful Jews are still looking for the coming of the Messiah. Under Jewish law, they believe that they need a Temple to properly fulfill the law before God.

Since the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, however, the Jewish People can no longer offer sacrifices. In fact, 202 out of the 613 mitzvot (commandments) in the Torah cannot be performed without a Temple. This is troubling for orthodox Jews.

Regardless, and logically speaking, there is to be a Third Jewish Temple if the antichrist is to desecrate a Jewish temple in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. In other words, he will have to have a temple to desecrate. Presently, there is no temple. It would logically seem that this prophecy cannot be fulfilled until there is.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself (*antichrist*) above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that **he (*antichrist*) as God sitteth in the temple of God**, shewing himself that he is God.

The Third Temple refers to a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, which would succeed the first and second, destroyed in 587BCE and 70CE respectively. The idea of a rebuilt Third Temple is sacred in Judaism, particularly to Orthodox Jews.

Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and **measure the temple of God**, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the **Gentiles**: and the holy city shall **they tread under foot forty and two months**.

**Reinstated Sacrificial System** - Some Jews believe that it will occur in tandem with the arrival of the Messiah, and only then will the sacrificial practices of the First and Second Temple be reinstated. However, as we have seen, Jesus does not return until well after the Admonition of Desecration. So the Temple construction will precede Christ's return.

Furthermore, Christ was the “*end of the law,*” the sacrificial system. So He will certainly not need it for the sacrificial law.



There are differences of opinion even within Judaism. Conservative Judaism believes that while the Third Temple will be rebuilt, sacrificial worship will *not* resume. Reformed Judaism does not believe in the rebuilding of a Temple, saying ‘*Judaism has evolved further than that.*’

While there is debate as to whether the final Temple will include the sacrificial system, scripture implies that it will:

Daniel 9:27 And he (*antichrist*) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst (*middle*) of the week **he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel taught that in the midst of the 70th Week the Antichrist would cause the reinstated animal sacrificial system of Judaism to be brought to a halt. Thus, it will have to have been reinstated. He wrote of the Antichrist: “In the middle of the week [3½ years into it] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering” (Daniel 9:27). He will then desecrate the Temple by demanding worship of himself (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

**Temple Differences** - Aberrant theologies throw more wrenches in the works. *Replacement Theology* argues that God has no purpose left for the Jewish people. Oddly, *Dual Covenant Theology* maintains that Jews do not need Jesus because they can be saved through the Mosaic Covenant by following the Ten Commandments. Both views are seriously Biblically in error. The first is also rabidly anti-Zionist, and strongly anti-Semitic.

The differences get more complicated outside of Judaism. The notion of a rebuilt Temple, on top of the sites of the First and Second Temples on Temple Mount, has been a core part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most Muslims consider this an affront to their religion. Oddly, there is now a growing chorus of Muslims declaring that the Jews deserve a Temple on the Temple Mount too. I find this shocking.

The problem of the control of the Temple Mount was created in 1967, when the Jews conquered the Old City of Jerusalem in the Six Day War. Instead of asserting sovereignty, as they did with the rest of the Old City, the Israel Defense Minister, Moshe Dayan, who was a secular Jew, decided arbitrarily to turn control of the Temple Mount back to the Muslims and forbade Jewish worship on the mount, hoping this would demonstrate the desire of Israel for peace.

Instead, it signaled to the Muslims that the Jews were weak in their resolution to control the ancient capital. Since that time, the Muslims have denied Jews equal rights on the Temple Mount. The Waqf, an arm of the Jordanian Ministry of Sacred Properties, administers the site.

Several organizations, usually representing a small group of Orthodox Jews, have been formed with the objective of constructing the Third Temple in the present day. These organizations include the Temple Institute, which has already made most of the items they say will be used in the Temple when it is established.

**Archeology** - Much of the platform which is called the Temple Mount was not considered part of the Temple complex by Jewish law and was instead a platform built by King Herod meant to expand the available space around the actual Temple complex. The platform was built during renovations initiated by Herod on the Temple and the area around it. Thus, the exact and proper temple site is much debated.



Answering the charge of denial a Jewish Temple ever existed on the site, archaeologists discovered in decades-old research that the site of the Al-Aqsa mosque, which Muslims believe was built by Abraham, was once a place for Jewish ritual preparation for entering the Temple. The evidence for this came from a report filed by British archaeologist Robert Hamilton who had documented excavations of the mosque's foundations after it was destroyed in an earthquake in 1927.

He discovered beneath the floor of the mosque the remains of a Jewish miqveh (ritual pool used for purification). It dated to the time of the Second Temple when Jews immersed at this site before entering the Temple precincts. These findings, hidden deep in the British Mandatory archives department because they embarrassed Muslim officials, now provide evidence that the ancient Temple stood on the modern Temple Mount and was a place of Jewish presence.

It appears from recent archeological consensus that the open space beyond the Dome of the Rock, which faces the Eastern Gate, is the site. This is interesting in that it would seem that no Muslim temple will have to be removed in order for the Third Jewish Temple to be erected. Fascinatingly, the space is vacant.

**Ezekiel 37:28 Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.**

This prophecy appears to confirm that the Temple will be in place for Christ's Millennial Reign. However, it could merely mean that Jesus will "*tabernacle*" in Jerusalem with

man forever. Yet, Daniel's prophecy and Jesus confirmation in the Olivet Discourse affirm that a Temple will be in place by the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel.

"[Building the Third Temple] is an act which must be done to complete the redemption of the people of the Bible in the Land of the Bible. I cannot imagine an Israeli State or Israeli life in this country without the Temple Mount in the center of this life." - *Gershon Salomon, director of the Temple Mount Faithful*

"The Shekinah is brought about only through the Temple. ...In terms of our mission as a people, we cannot in any way reach our spiritual status without the Temple." - *Rabbi Chaim Richman, Director of the Temple Institute*

**Preparations** - Today's effort to build the Third Temple seems to be rooted in a non-fiction book written by the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, **Herman Wouk**. The book was titled, *This Is My God*, and was published in 1959. The book prompted Jews worldwide to take action toward the rebuilding of their temple.

Since 1987, when the Temple Movement began preparations for the rebuilding of the Third Temple, efforts to see this become a reality in the 21st century have been slowly progressing. The exiles of Israel have been, and still are, returning to the Promised Land. Preparations to build the Third Temple are progressing through the efforts of the Temple Institute and the Temple Mount Faithful Movement. It would seem from prophecy that Israel is instructed to, and will, rebuild the Temple:

Exodus 25:8 Let them **construct a sanctuary** for Me, that I may dwell among them. (See also: Exodus 40:34–35 and 1 Kings 8:11)

Ezekiel 43:4–7 The glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east. ... I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. He said: 'Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is **where I will live among the Israelites forever.**'

The Temple Institute, as well as the Temple Mount and Eretz Yisrael Faithful Movement, are the two main Jewish organizations responsible for making preparations for the Third Temple and the reinstatement of sacrificial worship. The Temple Institute was founded by a zealous Jewish rabbi named Yisrael Ariel. (I think it is interesting that Ariel is a poetic, scriptural name for Jerusalem! See: *Isaiah 29:1-2,7*) Other organizations have plans, too. One wants to pitch a tabernacle-style tent on the Mount; another wants to build a synagogue in one of the corners of the Temple Mount platform.

"One third of all Torah commandments pertain to the building of and service in the Holy Temple. Today, we not only mourn the destruction of the two Holy Temples, but also our inability to fulfill one third of the Torah. Over the last three decades, the Temple Institute has done everything in our power to research and prepare for the Third Temple. As world Jewry sits on the ground mourning the first two Temples, we have taken a huge

leap towards the rebuilding, by releasing a 3D architectural rendition of the Third Temple” - *Rabbi Chaim Richman, Temple Institute Director*

**Priests** - The Temple Institute’s School is training certified, DNA-tested Cohen (descendants of the High Priest Aaron) to perform the Temple duties. And the final element, the Red Heifer, is being bred in Israel to be sacrificed in the *ritual purification* of the priests and the vessels, so they may formally enter the holiest of holy areas on the entire earth.

The Sanhedrin and the Temple Movement also hold reenactments of Temple ceremonies for the training of those who are from the priestly class known as Kohanim. This training involves special schooling on the duties of the priests, the use of ritual vessels created for use in the Third Temple, and practice on a newly constructed altar of burnt offering. This altar is unique because it was designed to be disassembled and quickly reassembled in its proper permanent location, because the people of Israel are required to build an altar exclusively on the site of the original altar on Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount.

Concerning the preparations for the Temple service, the Sanhedrin has taken steps necessary for reinstating future Temple service. One project of the group has been the planting of the Biblical Temple forest which will serve the agricultural needs of the Third Temple.

**Red Heifer** - Rabbi Richman, also a member of the Sanhedrin, has been heading a project to restore the sacred Red Heifer to Israel. According to Numbers 19, the ashes of the Red Heifer mixed with water are a necessary element for purifying Jews to enable them to do service in the Temple. During the time of the First and Second Temples, a span of approximately 1,000 years, only nine Red Heifers were used in preparing the waters used to purify Jews.

A red heifer cannot be transported to Israel for use in the Red Heifer ceremony, because the animal cannot have ever worn a yoke and must be born in the Land of Israel. The project is the culmination of years of research at the Temple Institute that fuses ancient religious texts and modern science. The Heifer must be 25 months old.

The Red Heifer is a female cow, three years of age, with perfect consistency of a particular reddish hue, having not even two hairs of any other color. The heifer also may never be used for any type of labor, and must be totally blemish-free. The ordinance of the *para aduma*, the Red Heifer, is found in the Torah, in the book of Numbers Chapter 19, and elucidated in the teachings of the Sages of Israel. The process of purification through the Red Heifer is the only antidote to the state of impurity caused by death, and thus, intrinsically imperative for the reestablishment of purity.

**Crimson** - Another recent rediscovery of the Temple Institute has been the revival of the science of producing biblical crimson. This dye was used in the garments of the High Priest, the *parochet* (the massive curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the

Holy Place in the Temple), and was an ingredient used in the mixture combined with ashes of the Red Heifer. Professor Zohar Amar of Bar Ilan University discovered that the eggs of the tola'at shani (crimson worm) found in modern Israel would produce the crimson dye.

**Out of the Blue** - Thousands of years ago, one shade of blue was prized above all others for those of the Jewish faith. Tekhelet protected the Ark of the Covenant, the headdresses donned by Jewish high priests and the robes worn by ancient kings and princes—that is until 70 A.D., when Rome's imperial forces razed Jerusalem's Second Temple and crushed the subsequent uprising of Jews, bringing an abrupt end to the color's dominance over the Near East. Dye workers started to forget the secrets to making tekhelet, from details as rudimentary as the color's exact hue to the method of its production.

A major break in the ongoing debate arrived in 1985, when chemist Otto Elsner seemingly chanced upon the formula for tekhelet. A 2,000-year old textile containing a mysterious blue dye described in the Bible has been uncovered in Israel. The cloth, which displays one of the few remnants of the ancient colour ever found, was dyed using a snail known as the Murex trunculus. The gland of this sea-snail secretes a yellow fluid that, when exposed to sunlight, turns purple-blue and can be used to dye cloth.

**Ark of the Covenant** - The only thing needed for the Temple that the Temple Institute has not produced is the Ark of the Covenant. The reason they have refrained from tackling this project is because they are convinced that the original Ark is located beneath the Temple Mount in a special chamber that was designed for the Ark's safekeeping.

The last mention of the Ark in the Scriptures is found in 2 Chronicles 35:3, where we are told that King Josiah had it returned to the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple. Presumably, it had been removed by King Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33: 4-5) when he desecrated the Temple by building within it altars to foreign gods.

The Bible does not reveal what happened to the Ark when Solomon's Temple was later destroyed by the Babylonians. There never was an Ark in the Second Temple that was built after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity. The Orthodox believe this was due to the fact that Israel was under either Persian, Greek or Roman control during the Second Temple period (516 BC to 70 AD). Thus, the Ark was kept hidden to keep it out of Gentile hands.

Thus, the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple was an empty chamber, without the Ark of the Covenant. When the Roman General Pompey conquered Jerusalem around 63 B.C., he demanded the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. When he did, he came out saying that he could not understand what all the interest was about, when it was only an empty room.

There persists a legend that the Ark does exist on earth, but is hidden. A recently published book by Randall Price, entitled *In Search of Temple Treasures*, presents the various views on what has happened to the Ark. Some of the traditions place the Ark outside of Israel, such as at Mt. Nebo, Egypt and even far-off Ethiopia. But all of these traditions have problems and seem unlikely, since there is a lack of any scriptural evidence for them.

A view that has predominated in rabbinic circles is that the Ark was hidden in a cave beneath the Temple Mount in the very heart of Israel. The theory goes that the priests hid the Ark beneath the Temple Mount, perhaps as early as during the time of King Josiah, since the coming prophesied invasion by the Babylonians was only a matter of time. By hiding the Ark and other Temple treasures, the priests felt that the priceless sacred articles could be protected from desecration by the pagan invaders.

**Architectural Plans** - The Third Temple is to be built according to the measurements given in the book of Ezekiel. The exact dimensions of the Sanctuary and Courtyards are still unclear, as there are different opinions as to which size cubit is used in certain areas. Most believe that the description and measurements given in the prophecy of Ezekiel are workable and correct, and that there is enough room in the northern section for the Third Temple to fit.

Drawing \$104,814 from its first ever Indiegogo campaign, the Temple Institute stated the 882 pledged contributions would pay for the complete work-up of the future Temple's architectural plans. <https://jewishstandard.timesofisrael.com/leaked-plans-for-third-temple-in-jerusalem/>

“The architects will fuse Jewish law with modern technology to prepare for a **fully modern third Temple**, Kosher to the letter of the law.” - *Rabbi Chaim Richman, Temple Institute's international director*

However, the Orthodox Jews of Israel do not truly have a unified view of the architectural features of the Third Temple. The Temple Institute has taken the position that the Third Temple should resemble the second one. Others maintain that it should follow the architectural description contained in Ezekiel 40-42. Another group believes the Temple will just descend from Heaven when the Messiah comes. Christians maintain that the Temple described by Ezekiel is the Millennial Temple which will be built after Jesus returns. They also believe that the Third Temple will most likely be destroyed during the Great Tribulation.

**Sanhedrin** - The revival of the ancient Jewish Sanhedrin Council is another very important sign of Jewish preparations for the appearance of the Messiah. In New Testament times, the Great Sanhedrin was a council made up of 70 Jewish sages plus a presiding president who was usually the High Priest. The group served as the Supreme Court of Israel regarding matters of Jewish religious and ceremonial laws.

During the years between 1538 and 1949, there were five major attempts to re-establish the Sanhedrin, but none of them were successful. But in October of 2004, a group of

rabbis meeting in Tiberias succeeded in reconvening the Sanhedrin and have kept it going since that time, conducting their meetings in Jerusalem.

These modern day Orthodox shakers and movers in Israel believe it is necessary to have a Sanhedrin in order to authenticate the Messiah when He comes. But it is significant that their first order of business was to launch a research project to determine the exact location of the First and Second Temples. This is a top priority with them because they believe the Third Temple must be built on the same location.

The “nascent” Sanhedrin (as it is usually called) has not yet been recognized by the Israeli government. But it does appear to have quasi-recognition from the secular court system as a rabbinical court.

**Ready to Go** - Everything is ready for the rebuilding of the Third Temple. Everything, that is, except access to the land on which to build it. Since the liberation of the Mount in 1967, the Muslim world has made great efforts to claim the entire 37-acre (150,000 square meter) platform as its own sacred land, calling the site in Arabic *al-Haram al-Šarif*—the Noble Sanctuary.

All of this activity in behalf of the construction of a Third Temple — both religious and political — is clear evidence of a move of God on Jewish hearts to motivate them to prepare for the end-time events revealed in the book of Revelation. They think they are getting ready to build the Temple for the soon coming Messiah.

In March of 2019, Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, founder of the Temple Institute, declared that the Temple services could be instituted *within four hours after access to the Temple Mount* is granted. So, most likely, the Orthodox will erect a temporary tabernacle on the Temple Mount and use it while the Third Temple is being built.

**Irony** - the Orthodox rabbis are reading the signs of the times and calling their people to prepare for the Messiah’s immediate appearance. Meanwhile, the Church is asleep, ignoring God’s Prophetic Word and refusing to pay attention to the Signs of the Times.

What an irony! The first time Jesus came, it was the Jews who refused to believe. Today, it’s the Church that is caught up in unbelief while the Orthodox Jews are anxiously watching for the Messiah while making fervent preparations for Him.

**Trouble** - It would seem that only an incredibly respected, trusted, and honored man by both Muslims and Jews will be able to establish a peace plan that allows the Jewish People to worship the Lord in a Temple on the Mount that King David purchased (2 Samuel 24:18–25). It will likely be the antichrist; however, it could be a forerunner, another trusted man. Astonishingly, the recent **Abraham Accords** allow the Jews to access the Temple Mount again, even to the point of erecting a Temple.

Whoever this man is and whatever trouble awaits us (known as *Jacob's Trouble*) when he breaks the peace plan as Daniel 9:27 predicts, we can be confident that God is on the throne and in control. God has prophesied all that is about to unfold.

(Sources: *Lamb & Lion Ministry, Temple Institute, Zion's Hope, and others.*)

## Gospel Preached to the World

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As discussed numerous times in this document, Jesus said “*when you see these things,*” following His clear answer in response to the question of the Disciples “*what will be the sign of Your coming.*” When asked name on of the “*these things,*” invariably someone will suggest the notion that the “*gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to the in all the world,*” as a sign.

Matthew 24:14 And this **gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world** for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come.**

Jesus made this comment following the discussion of the First Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse during what He called the “*Beginning of Sorrows.*” This was immediately prior to the mention of the “*Abomination of Desolation.*”

The question is, is this really a sign? Or, is it a statement of fact

Could this be one of the “*these things*” Jesus said to look for as a “sign” of His coming? Well, maybe. But, it begs the question, **how will you know when it is complete?** Will someone ring a bell? Will there be a countdown clock? Will it be in the headlines? It is doubtful.

I would contend that while this will indeed happen, it is not a sign. It is certainly not a sign of Christ's return. For the passage says, “*then shall the end come.*”

“*The end*” would, I believe in this case, refer to the end of the age – the end of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. Note that we are Raptured prior to “*the end,*” and even prior to the wrath of God. Christ clearly returns prior to “*the end.*”

I would suggest that this might refer to one of three events, or even all three. The first would be the **Two Witnesses** discussed above. These two witnesses will

Revelation 11:3 And I will give power unto my **two witnesses**, and they **shall prophesy** a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

While we are not told exactly what they say, it would seem likely that they warn of coming judgment, call man to repentance, and share the Gospel. Sadly, the world hates their message and even celebrates their temporary death, we are told.

The second option could be what is referred to as the **Gospel Angel**.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another **angel** fly in the midst of heaven, **having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth**, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And lastly, it could include the proclamation of the Gospel as part of the **Great Commission**.

Matthew 28:19 **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

So is this a sign of Christ's return. No, I do not think so. Again, how will we know when this is complete? I believe that God in His mercy will continue to offer salvation to "*those in darkness*" all the way up to the "*end of the age*." God shows mercy even during the execution of His judgment on mankind.

**As a side note**, all of this sharing of the Gospel until the "end," flies in the face of the notion that the Holy Spirit leaves with the raptured church (A decidedly Pre-Tribulational position; as they also wrongly equate the Holy Spirit with the Restrainer). It would seem that God is active seeking the lost unto "*the end*."

## Patience of God

It is clear from Scripture that God does not desire for any to perish. In fact, the Gospel which begins in Genesis is not complete until Revelation. Few seem to grasp this. The Gospel is not completed until Christ returns and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Men will have the opportunity to take part, even until the end.

Proverbs 9:4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, 5 **Come, eat of my bread, and**

**drink of the wine which I have mingled. 6 Forsake the foolish, and live;** and go in the way of understanding.

God is patient and persist in giving men a chance repent all the way until the end. When Satan is finally cast to earth, in the middle of the 70th Week of Daniel, he knows his time is short.

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! **for the devil is come down unto you**, having great wrath, because he **knoweth that he hath but a short time**.

In his “*great wrath*” he gets busy attempting to take as many to hell with him as possible. In the meantime men continue to mock God and Jesus promised return.

2 Peter 3:4 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 the creation.

As we can see in the section above, God is sharing the possibility of redemption all the way to the very end. While the Great Commission will clearly end at the Rapture of the Church, God continues to call men to repentance through the Gospel Angel and the two Witnesses.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is **longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance**.

## Is the Millennium Real?

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Is the proverbial Millennium a real thousand years? According to the Post-millennial views it is allegorical, not literal. As I have stated before, I find this rather odd. Revelation 20 speaks of the Millennium as a “*thousand years*” no less than six times.

First let’s look at God’s description of this time:

Jeremiah 31:13 Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. 17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

Isaiah 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Hosea 2:18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. 19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. *(Note: This passage may refer to the New Heaven and New Earth – See: The Wolf and Lamb.)*

Amos 9:13 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

Isaiah 4:2 In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: 4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Zechariah 14:8 And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.

9 And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.

Isaiah 65:19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. 20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. ... 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

Isaiah 33:24 And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. ... 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Well, it sure sounds like a real period of time. According to Revelation 20, it lasts 1,000 years before the New Heaven and New Earth are created.

Amillennialism, "a" meaning 'no,' holds that there is *no millennium*. It's a spiritualized interpretation of the Bible formulated by **Augustine** in about 400 A.D. it interprets the scriptures are spiritualized and scripture is allegorized. Prophecy is symbolic. There's no Millennial Kingdom, and we're in the Kingdom right now, they believe. Yet, if it were so, were are these promises?

Post-Millennialism is an idea that the church will eventually evangelize the entire world, and then all the world will become saved, and then we will hand the keys of the kingdom over to Jesus when He returns. That was a popular idea until people realized how bad the world is getting. Likewise, they believe that there is no literal Millennial Kingdom, and we're in the Kingdom right now, they believe.

Historic Pre-Millennialism, is the view that the early church fathers held for over three centuries, and takes a literal interpretation of the Bible. But, they differ about the timing of the Rapture and the Second Coming being separate events.

“So, when you look at those views, what view best fits a literal interpretation of the Bible? Is the Bible to be interpreted literally or symbolically? Is there a literal seed? Yes, Jesus Christ. Is there a literal throne? Yes, it'll be in Jerusalem. Is there a literal kingdom? Yes. It'll be for that thousand years and then on into Eternity. And will it last forever? Amen. The Bible says yes, it was.

So, when we go back to the golden rule of interpretation, *when the plain sense makes sense, look for no other sense lest you end up with nonsense*. We can go back to my theme from the very beginning, a literal interpretation of the Bible reveals that Jesus Christ will in the future physically rule over this Earth for a 1000 years.” – *Lamb & Lion Ministries*

Personally, I cannot believe that the Millennium is anything other than a time when Jesus rules our planet from Jerusalem for one thousand years, just like John said.

## The Wolf and Lamb

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There is a commonly referred to period of time were all animals and man will live in perfect peace and harmony. Animals will no longer eat each other. They will no longer fear man. It is in this timeframe that there will no longer be tears, death, pain, or sickness. Many Christians speak of these things while indirectly equating it to various different future periods of time. Few, it seems, stop to think about when it is that this will occur.

First, it is not the '*lion and the lamb*' that lie down together (although, they may), as it is most often referred to, rather the '*wolf and the lamb*.' It is typically misquoted. The mistake may stem from the lion and lamb passage in Revelation 5, clearing referring to Jesus Christ in both cases – as both the Lion and the Lamb.

Revelation 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders,

stood a **Lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

The question is, is this event a *millennial reference*, or is this following the “*new heavens and new earth*,” which comes after the millennium? The classic passage in Isaiah 11 is not completely clear.

Isaiah 11:1 And there shall come forth a **rod out of the stem of Jesse**, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: ... 4 But with **righteousness shall he judge** the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. ... 6 The **wolf** also shall dwell with the **lamb**, and the **leopard** shall lie down with the **kid**; and the **calf** and the young **lion** and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the **cow** and the **bear** shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the **lion** shall eat **straw** like the **ox**. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the **asp**, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the **cockatrice'** den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my **holy mountain**: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. 10 And **in that day** there shall be a **root of Jesse**, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and **his rest shall be glorious**.

However, it says the “*Root of Jesse*,” referring to Jesus, “*rest shall be glorious*.” This strikes me as referring to the “*new heavens and new earth*” eternal season. Nevertheless, the seemingly parallel verse in Isaiah 65:25 is clearly preceded in chapter 65 by a reference to the “*new heavens and new earth*.”

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create **new heavens and a new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. ... 19 And I will rejoice in **Jerusalem**, and joy in my people: and the voice of **weeping shall be no more** heard in her, nor the voice of crying. ... 21 And they shall **build houses, and inhabit them**; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. ... 23 They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. ... 25 The **wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain**, saith the Lord.

The earth is not perfect during the *millennium*; although, Christ rules it with perfect judgment from the current Jerusalem. This is still during what is a *fallen, albeit now judged, world*.

The world does not become perfect until it is remade. At the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom, there will be there a “*new heavens and new earth*” to replace our current

fallen one. A “*new Jerusalem*” also comes “*down from heaven*,” where Jesus will dwell eternally with man.

Revelation 21:1 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. 2 And I John saw the **holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 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. 4 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.** 5 ... Behold, I make all things new.

As a side note, the **Holy Mountain** references are important. The “*Holy Mountain*” is referred to throughout the Bible. It seems to reference Jerusalem in Solomon’s day with the Temple, the Millennium when Jesus rules this planet from there and after the New Heavens and Earth when Christ dwells with man for all eternity. All the earth will be Jesus’ Holy Mountain following the “*new heavens and new earth*.” It does not appear to speak to our present age – as such, Israel from 1948 to present.

## Early Beliefs

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Among evangelical Christians in the United States, 58 percent believe that Jesus Christ will return to Earth by the year 2050, [according to a 2010 Pew Research survey](#). If you think that's a fringe position, Pew says that 41 percent of all Americans (not just evangelicals) believe that the Second Coming is not only real, but that it's going to happen by 2050 — in other words, in their lifetime.

## Early Church

Jesus and his fellow Jews would have also been familiar with the book of Daniel, the most apocalyptic text in the Old Testament. For the first century after Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to heaven, most Christians were premillennialists who believed that his Second Coming was close at hand.

Even as the promised day failed to appear, early Christian writers like Clement of Rome and Tertullian held to the pre-millennial belief that Jesus would return in person to conquer evil and reign as the prophesied "King of Kings."

"Nor let any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of future persecution, or the coming of the threatening Antichrist, as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and by the heavenly warnings. Antichrist is coming, but above him comes Christ also. The enemy goeth about and rageth, but immediately the Lord follows to avenge our sufferings and our wounds. The adversary is enraged and threatens, but there is One who can deliver us from his hands." - *Cyprian (C.200–C.258), (Epistle 55, 7)*

"Now the privilege of this favour [be alive when Christ comes back] awaits those who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist, deserve by an instantaneous death [i.e., raptured/translation], which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints; as he writes to the Thessalonians [1 Thess 4:15–17]." - *Tertullian (C.145–C.220), (On the Resurrection of the Flesh, 41)*

"For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist . . . . [A]nd [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one." - *Irenaeus (C.120–C.202), (Against Heresies, V, 35, 1)*

"He [Jesus Christ] shall come from heaven with glory, when the man of apostasy [Antichrist], who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians." - *Justin Martyr (C.110–C.165), (Dialogue with Trypho, CX)*

## Postmillennialism

Gradually, though, that belief faded and a new interpretation of the timing of the Second Coming was popularized by the fourth-century theologian **Augustine of Hippo**. In his best-known work, "*The City of God*," Augustine argued that the Millennium had already begun (postmillennialism), or more accurately, that the 1,000-year reign of Christ was a "*spiritual kingdom*" rather than a physical kingdom.

Some theologians call Augustine's approach "*amillennialism*" because it ditches a literal reading of Revelation, Daniel and Matthew, and interprets the prophecies as figurative language describing how Christ works through his Earthly Church to prepare the world for His triumphant return. Through the Middle Ages, the Church saw itself as fulfilling

much of these millennial prophecies. The Church was seen as working out God's will on Earth.

## Pre-Tribulationism

Augustine's symbolic, allegorical, reading of the Second Coming ruled the Church for nearly 1,500 years, but then came a 19th-century preacher named **John Nelson Darby**. The Irish reformer was convinced that the Church was in ruins and that the end times were upon us.

In his literal reading of the Bible's apocalyptic texts, Darby found that God's creation was divided into seven distinct ages or "*dispensations*," the final one being the Millennium. Darby taught a fiery premillennial doctrine that Christ would undoubtedly return in person to vanquish the Antichrist, bind Satan and reign over his Earthly kingdom for 1,000 years.

But first, the righteous and faithful would be "caught up" to heaven during the "Rapture," an event prophesied in the New Testament book of 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. Darby's creative interpretation of the Second Coming and end of days became known as "premillennial dispensationalism" and eventually came to rule the apocalyptic worldview of evangelical Christianity.

"*The Late Great Planet Earth*" was a bestselling book in 1970 that popularized Darby's system for a new generation of Christians. The book, written by Hal Lindsey, was one of the first to link biblical prophecies of the Second Coming explicitly to current world events like the Cold War and the restoration of the Jewish state of Israel. More than 35 million copies of "The Late Great Planet Earth" have been sold, a strong indication of the ongoing urgency and resonance of the Second Coming with modern Christians.

The bestselling "*Left Behind*" series imagined by the Left Behind books by **Tim LaHaye** and **Jerry B. Jenkins**, which fictionalized the Rapture in our day, is further proof that the Second Coming is alive and well in the Christian imagination. It was based on a Pretribulation view of eschatology.

## Date Setters

For the past 2,000 years, people have been predicting a date for the end of the world and/or Christ's return ([Wikipedia has a very long list of predictions](#)). In the 1840s, the Millerites sold their Earthly possessions ahead of William Miller's chosen date of Oct. 22, 1844. Some went so far as to climb up into trees to be closer to heaven when the Second Coming came. When the prophecy failed to materialize, Miller's followers continued on as Seventh-Day Adventists. - (*Sources: Numerous*)

**Resource:** Early Church Fathers Quotes –  
<https://prewrathrapture.com/category/church-history/>

## Early Beliefs - Facing the Antichrist

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Contrary to what many teach, the **early Church fathers clearly believed that the Church would one day face the antichrist before Christ returned.** This flies in the face of Pre-tribulational and Mid-tribulational views. Many have willfully conflated the early church's Pre-millennial beliefs as congruent with Pre-tribulational views. They are not.

The early church fathers were concerned that their flock was **prepared to face the antichrist, endure the Great Tribulation, and remain faithful to the end.** Speaking of this future persecution, the first century Didache soberly admonishes ***“a lifetime of faith will be of no advantage to you unless you prove perfect at the very last.”***

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that endureth to the end shall be saved.** 23 But **when they persecute you** in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, *till the Son of man be come.*

Matthew 24: 9 Then shall **they deliver you up to be afflicted,** and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ... 13 But he that shall **endure unto the end,** the same shall be saved.

Enduring to the end, *“him that overcometh,”* is an important concept. God promises many wonderful things to him that stands fast and *endures to the end.* But, the wrath of the antichrist and the Great Tribulation is the most exacting test yet awaiting the Church.

Revelation 2:7 ...To him that **overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 ... He that **overcometh** shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:17 ... To him that **overcometh** will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation 2:26 And he that **overcometh**, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Revelation 3:5 He that **overcometh**, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12 Him that **overcometh** will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Revelation 3:21 To him that **overcometh** will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 21:7 He that **overcometh** shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Even the Apostle Paul was concerned with finishing the “race” strong, enduring to the end, so as *not to be a “castaway.”*

1 Corinthians 9:24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So **run, that ye may obtain.**

1 Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: **lest** that by any means, when I have preached to others, **I myself should be a castaway.**

There is coming a time, when the antichrist subdues this planet, that many will be deceived. It will be a time of terrible persecution, called the Great Tribulation, when much deception will take place.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Many will *fall away* from the faith. Many will be deceived by the antichrist. (**Note:** *These are believers who ‘fall away’ from the faith. One cannot fall from something they are not. Many of our churches wrongly teach that these were not truly saved. It makes no sense.*)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a **falling away first**, and that **man of sin be revealed**, the son of perdition;

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall **deceive the very elect**.

## The Elect

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Many falsely assume that by being saved, professing to be a Christian, they are the 'elect' and, thus, cannot be deceived. This, I contend, is not what this last verse is saying. There is a "remnant," but not all who profess Christ are "elect."

Romans 11:5 Even so then at this present time also there is a *remnant* according to the **election** of grace.

The "elect" are those that, by His "foreknowledge," God knows **will endure to the end** – they will 'overcome' and not be deceived.

1 Peter 1:2 **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God** the Father ...

Thankfully, God shortens the Great Tribulation "for the elect's sake" – those standing firm in Christ while enduring persecution.

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**.

They are truly His for eternity. Finally, Christ returns to gather His elect – those Saints who stand firm until the end of the Great Tribulation.

Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and **they shall gather together his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Hebrews 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

All of this terrible persecution at the hands of the antichrist happens after the Abomination of Desolation in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. **Jesus warned of**

**this day to come.** Yet, our modern day church, promoting Pre-tribulational doctrine, teaches that the Church is immune and exempt from the Great Tribulation.

It is decidedly, false doctrine. Why would the Church be warned if the Church is to be taken out before these things? As you will see the **early Church**, and **early Church Fathers, expected the Church to one day face the antichrist and endure the Great Tribulation.**

## Didache (50-120 AD)

The Didache is considered to be an independent and very early Christian writing, from the end of the first century. It defined a code of Christian conduct, and Church order. Didache means "the teaching," or more specifically, "*the teaching of the twelve Apostles.*" It reveals the faith and practice of the earliest Church body, most likely in Antioch.

It also shows a detailed relationship with the gospel of Matthew and with Revelation. The last chapter of the Didache is written in the apocalyptic style paralleling the Olivet Discourse.

16:1 "Watch" over your life: do not let "your lamps" go out, and do not keep "your loins ungirded"; but **"be ready,"** for "*you do not know the hour when our Lord is coming.*" 2 Meet together frequently in your search for what is good for your souls, since **"a lifetime of faith will be of no advantage" to you unless you prove perfect at the very last.** 3 For in the final days multitudes of false prophets and seducers will appear. 4 Sheep will turn into wolves, and love into hatred. For with the increase of iniquity men will hate, persecute, and betray each other. And **then the world deceiver (antichrist) will appear in the guise of God's Son.** He will work "signs and wonders" and the earth will fall into his hands and he will commit outrages such as have never occurred before. 5 Then mankind will come to the **fiery trial** "and **many will fall away**" and perish, "but those who persevere" in their faith "will be saved" by the Curse himself. 6 Then "there will appear the signs" of the Truth: first the sign of stretched-out [hands] in heaven, then the sign of "a trumpet's blast," and thirdly the resurrection of the dead, though not of all the dead, 7 but as it has been said: "The Lord will come and all his saints with him. **Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of the sky.**"

As you see, the **first century Church expected to face the antichrist** and his persecution prior to Christ's return. It taught the Church to be prepared to encounter the antichrist.

**Early Church Fathers**, extending into the second and third centuries, who wrote subsequent to the Didache, agreed that **the Church will one day suffer the**

**antichrist's persecution** – the **Great Tribulation** (Fifth Seal). They admonished their flocks to be ready to endure with hope in Jesus, who will return to deliver His saints.

### **Epistle of Barnabas (80-100 AD)**

The final stumbling-block (or source of danger) approaches, concerning which it is written ... We **take earnest heed in these last days**; for the whole [past] time of *your faith will profit you nothing, unless now in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger*, as becomes the sons of God. That **the Black One** (antichrist) may find no means of entrance, let us flee from every vanity, let us utterly hate the works of the way of wickedness. Do not, by retiring apart, live a solitary life, as if you were already [fully] justified ... Take heed, lest resting at our ease, as those who are the called [of God], we should fall asleep in our sins, and **the wicked prince**, acquiring power over us, **should thrust us away from the kingdom of the Lord**. ...

### **The Shepherd of Hermas (95-150 AD)**

Blessed are ye, as many as **endure patiently the great tribulation** that cometh, and as many as shall not deny their life. (V2.2)

Ye then that abide and **pass through the fire** will be purified by it. ... But the white portion is the coming age, in which the elect of God shall dwell; because the elect of God shall be without spot and pure unto life eternal. Wherefore cease not thou to speak in the ears of the saints. Ye have now the symbolism also of **the tribulation which is coming in power**. (V4.3)

### **Justin Martyr (110-165 AD)**

He (Jesus Christ) shall come from heaven with glory, **when the man of apostasy** (antichrist), who speaks strange things against the Most High, shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us the Christians (Trypho, CX)

### **Irenaeus (120-202 AD)**

When **in the end** the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, **There shall be tribulation** such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be. Matthew 24:21 For **this is the last contest of the righteous**, in which, **when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption**. (Against Heresies V 29,1)

It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the **fulfilment of the prophecy** (the antichrist), than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many

names can be found possessing the number mentioned; and the same question will, after all, remain unsolved. ... But he indicates the number of the name now, that when this man (antichrist) comes **we may avoid him, being aware who he is.** (Against Heresies V 30,3,4)

For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the **resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist** ... and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and **who have suffered tribulation**, as well as **escaped the hands of the Wicked one.** (Against Heresies V 35,1)

### **Tertulian (145-220 AD)**

Heresies, at the present time, will no less rend the church by their perversion of doctrine, than will **Antichrist persecute her at that day** by the cruelty of his attacks, except that persecution make seven martyrs, (but) heresy only apostates. (Against Heretics IV)

The **beast Antichrist** with his false prophet may **wage war on the Church** of God. (Resurrection of the Flesh, 25)

Now the privilege of this **favour awaits those** who shall at the coming of the Lord be found in the flesh, and **who shall, owing to the oppressions of the time of Antichrist**, deserve by an instantaneous death, which is accomplished by a sudden change, to become qualified to join the rising saints; as he writes to the 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17(Resurrection of the Flesh, 41)

### **Hippolytus (185-235 AD)**

When the times are fulfilled, and the ten horns spring from the beast in the last (times), **then Antichrist will appear** among them. When he makes **war against the saints**, and persecutes them, then may we expect the manifestation of the Lord from heaven. (On Daniel II 7)

Now, concerning the **tribulation of the persecution** which is to **fall upon the Church** from the adversary . . . . That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which **the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church.** (Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 60, 61)

### **Cyprian (200-256 AD)**

For you ought to know and to believe, and hold it for certain, that the **day of affliction** has begun to hang over our heads, and the end of the world

and the **time of Antichrist** to draw near, so that **we must all stand prepared for the battle**; nor consider anything but the glory of life eternal, and the crown of the confession of the Lord; and not regard those things which are coming as being such as were those which have passed away. A severer and a fiercer fight is now threatening, for which the soldiers of Christ ought to **prepare themselves with uncorrupted faith and robust courage**, considering that they drink the cup of Christ's blood daily, for the reason that they themselves also **may be able to shed their blood for Christ**. (Epistle 55,1)

Nor let any one of you, beloved brethren, be so terrified by the fear of **future persecution**, or the coming of the **threatening Antichrist**, as not to be found armed for all things by the evangelical exhortations and precepts, and by the heavenly warnings. **Antichrist is coming**, but above him comes Christ also. **The enemy goes about and rages, but immediately the Lord follows to avenge our sufferings and our wounds**. The adversary is enraged and threatens, but there is **One who can deliver us** from his hands. (Epistle 55,7)

## Melito of Sardis

The greatness of the tribulation in this region, and the exceeding anger of the heathen *nations* against the saints, and the sufferings which the blessed Witnesses endured, neither are we competent to describe accurately, nor indeed is it possible to detail them in writing. For with all his strength **did the adversary assail us, even then giving a foretaste of his activity among us which is to be without restraint**; [in context of the removal of the restrainer 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8]

## Commodianus

Those who are more worthy, and who are begotten of an illustrious stem, and the **men of nobility under the conquered Antichrist**, according to God's command **living again in the world for a thousand years, indeed, that they may serve the saints, and the High One ...** (Instructions xlv, lxxx)

## Constitutions of the Holy

**And then shall appear the deceiver of the world**, the enemy of the truth, the prince of lies,(11) whom the Lord Jesus "shall destroy with the spirit of His mouth, who takes away the wicked with His lips; and many shall be offended at Him. **But they that endure to the end, the same shall be saved**. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven;"(12) and afterwards shall be the voice of a trumpet by the archangel;(13) and in that interval shall be the revival of those that were

asleep. And then shall the Lord come, and all His saints with Him, (VII, ii, xxxi, xxxii)

## Hermas

"This beast is a type of the **great tribulation that is coming**. If then you **prepare yourselves**, repent with all your heart, and turn to the Lord, it will be possible for you to escape it." (Vol. 2 pg 11)

"The **man of apostasy** (Antichrist) ... **shall venture to do unlawful deeds on the earth against us Christians...**" (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew AD 110*)

With Pre-tribulational doctrine, the American church is being falsely led to believe that they do not need to be concerned with the prospect of facing the antichrist. They expect to be raptured before the antichrist comes on the scene.

As you just saw, the first century fathers of our faith would wholeheartedly disagree. Satan is laying his groundwork of deception to cause the modern church to be off-guard and unprepared. It will lead to the great "*falling away*," Paul spoke of. (See: *The Great Apostasy*)

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (Christ's Return) shall not come, except there come **a falling away first**, and that man of sin (antichrist) be revealed, the son of perdition;

Otherwise God's repeated, clear warning to "*endure*," "*hold fast*", and "*overcome*" would be an idle admonition.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we **hold fast** the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us **hold fast** our profession.

Hebrews 10:23 Let us **hold fast** the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

Revelation 2:25 But that which ye have already **hold fast** till I come.

Revelation 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and **hold fast**, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Revelation 3:11 Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast** which thou hast, *that no man take thy crown.*

These are but a few cautions to ‘*hold fast until the end.*’ Notice the last one warns “*that no man take thy crown.*”

Speaking to the Seven Churches, indeed the Church, John declares nine times to “overcome.” There are nine promises associated with this repeated counsel. More seriously, four, or more, are promises regarding *retaining eternal life.*

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that **overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that **overcometh** shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that **overcometh** will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Revelation 2:26 And he that **overcometh**, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Revelation 3:5 He that **overcometh**, the same shall be *clothed in white raiment*; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Revelation 3:12 Him that **overcometh** will I *make a pillar in the temple of my God*, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will *write upon him my new name.*

Revelation 3:21 To him that **overcometh** will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 21:7 He that **overcometh** shall *inherit all things*; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Jesus is even more direct; stating that those who “*endure to the end*” “*shall be saved.*” Like Revelation 3:5, it implies that the opposite is equally true; that those who do not “*endure*” will forfeit their salvation.

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that **endureth to the end** shall be saved.

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved.

Mark 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall **endure unto the end**, the same shall be saved.

When the antichrist comes on the scene, his goal will be to take as many Christians to hell with him as possible. In a two-pronged strategy to deceive, he will come with “*signs and lying wonders*.”

2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of **Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders**, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, *that they might be saved*.

He will also come with great persecution to coerce men to take the “**Mark of the Beast**.”

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

As the early church fathers implored, we must be ready to face the antichrist, “*hold fast*” in the Great Tribulation, and “*endure*” to the end. We must “*overcome*.” Eternity hangs in the balance.

## Balaam's Messianic Prophecy

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End-times prophecies are everywhere. Some 35% +/- of our Bibles deal with the Christ's Second Coming and the events therein. In fact, there is seven-times more prophecy recorded in the Bible for Jesus' Second Coming than there is regarding His First Coming. There are 300 Old Testament prophecies regarding Jesus First Coming. There are 300 references, quotes, or inferences in the book of Revelation to the Old Testament.

## Balaam's Oracles - Prophecies

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God's prophecy regarding **Israel**, **Jesus**, and the **antichrist** is everywhere in Scripture. Working from the writing of Travis Snow, *The Passover King*, shockingly, we find it **even in Balaam's four oracles**. Remember he was a prophet for hire. He was hired to curse the Israelites, but every time he opened his mouth God spoke through him.

He prophesied regarding Israel from their beginning to the eschatological end. We see Jesus' first coming out of Israel and His **second coming (end-time events)** to bring Jewish history to an end all in these four prophecies.

It is easy to become enamored with the interesting story, angel with the sword, and the talking donkey. But, a deeper dive reveals an Israel described from beginning to end, along with Jesus and the antichrist as the Oracles unfold. I have **color-coded the text** to help see the near and far aspects of these prophecies

### First Oracle

Numbers 23: 7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me **Jacob**, and come, defy **Israel**. 8 **How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?** or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? 9 For from the top of the rocks **I see him**, and from the hills **I behold him**: lo, **the people shall dwell alone**, and shall **not be reckoned among the nations**. 10 **Who can count the dust of Jacob**, and the number of the fourth part of **Israel**? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

### Second Oracle

Numbers 23:20 Behold, **I have received commandment to bless**: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. 21 He hath not beheld iniquity in **Jacob**, neither hath he seen perverseness in **Israel**: the Lord his **God is with him**, and the **shout of a king** is among them. 22 God **brought them out of Egypt**; **he** hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. 23 Surely there is *no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel*: according to this time it shall be said of **Jacob** and of **Israel**, What hath God wrought! 24 Behold, the **people shall rise up as a great lion**, and lift up himself as a **young lion**: **he** shall not lie down until **he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain**.

### Third Oracle

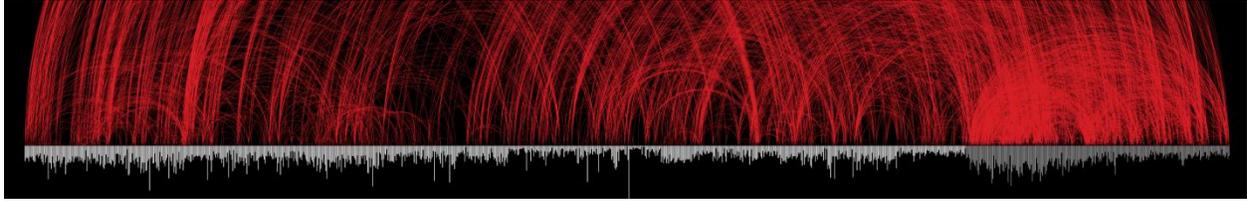
Numbers 24:3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the **Almighty**, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 5 **How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!** 6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. 7 **He** shall pour the water out of his buckets, and **his seed shall be in many waters**, and **his king shall be higher than Agag (Gog)**, and **his kingdom shall be exalted**. 8 God brought **him** forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: **he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows**. 9 **He** couched, **he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion**: who shall stir **him** up? **Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee**.

## Fourth Oracle

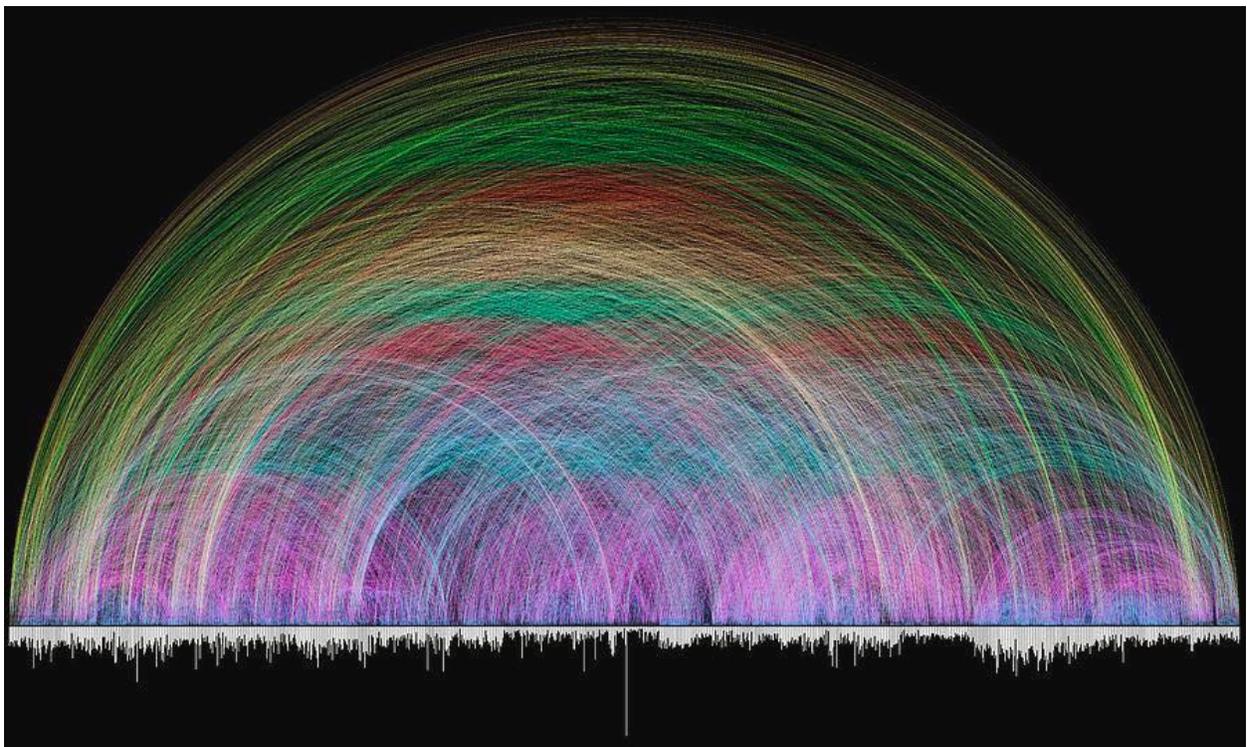
Numbers 24:14 And now, behold, **I** go unto my **people**: come therefore, and **I** will advertise thee what this **people** shall do to thy **people in the latter days**. 15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: 16 He hath said, which heard the words of **God**, and knew the knowledge of the **most High**, which saw the vision of the **Almighty**, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: 17 I shall see **him**, but not now: I shall behold **him**, but not nigh: there shall come a **Star out of Jacob**, and a **Sceptre shall rise out of Israel**, and **shall smite the corners of Moab**, and **destroy all the children of Sheth**. 18 And **Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession** for **his** enemies; and **Israel** shall do valiantly. 19 Out of **Jacob** shall come **he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city**. 20 And when **he** looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. 21 And **he** looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. 22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. 23 And **he** took up his parable, and said, Alas, **who shall live when God doeth this!** 24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. 25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

## Bible Interrelationship

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This Data Picture shows the 63,779 cross-references in the Bible. The white bars along the bottom represent each Bible chapter, Gen. 1 - Rev. 22. The line's color shows the reference's distance from the other. A cross-reference is a scripture that references another scripture.



<https://viz.bible/remaking-an-influential-cross-reference-visualization/>

Had the Bible been written by one person or at one time this would still be amazing; however, the 66 books of the Bible were written by 40 authors over the span of 1,500 to 1,600 years, while on 3 different continents, in three different languages.

The Bible is complex, diverse, and intricate, and yet it has one unified message.

In the case of eschatological prophecy, the fact that the end-time events are presented in the same order throughout all of scripture is a testament to having a unified author, the Holy Spirit.

## Pan-Millennialism

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“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

An estimated one-third or more of the Word of God is eschatological prophecy, which is crucial to the Bible’s validity. Prophecy is one of the confirmations which prove the Bible is indeed the specific Word of God, and that it is reliable, true, and vital to humanity.

However, many believers are uncomfortable studying Bible prophecy, often claiming that prophetic passages can be confusing, divisive, and difficult to understand. Others are not uncomfortable with prophecy, but view it as something which will come to pass no matter what, whether or not we study or understand it.

Their thinking is: *The end-times are the end-times; what will happen, will happen. Our responsibility is to preach the Gospel TODAY, and let God worry about tomorrow, particularly the end-times.*

Almost dismissively, those with such a viewpoint proclaim themselves proponents of “*Pan-Eschatology*” --- the mindset that all things will “*pan out in the end.*” Despite this prevalent thinking, this in **no way is what the Bible teaches.**

### Promised Blessing

Far from instructing readers to relegate prophecy to the attic of discarded Scripture, the Bible promises a blessing for those who read, hear, and take to heart what the Book of Revelation says (Revelation 1:3, 22:7).

By implication, this extends to the entire Bible, including prophetic passages, as there are more than **300 quotes or references from the Old Testament in Revelation.**

This reality negates the dismissive attitude of the “*Pan-Eschatology*” advocates, who tend to downplay the importance of the Old Testament. Why is this? To understand the

final book of the New Testament (and, of course, the entire Bible), one must understand the Old Testament, and particularly its end-time prophecies.

Nowhere in the Bible is it taught that believers should not concern themselves with prophecy because all things will “*pan out*.” Rather, prophecy teaches the opposite: *God has a specific and intricate plan for the end of the age, and He expects His people to see for themselves what that plan is.*

**Ignorance of truth is not a virtue**, nor is it bliss.

### **Negative Effects**

“*Pan-Eschatology*” is not something to take lightly or brush off. This way of viewing prophecy serves absolutely no good purpose, and hinders spiritual growth. Ignoring end-time prophecy is a gross neglect of Scripture, all of which the apostle Paul tells us “*is given by inspiration of God*” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Furthermore, “*Pan-Eschatology*” provides an opportunity for Satan to blind believers with his lies, because they fail to learn the truth of this crucial component of God’s Word. They can be walking right into end-time scenarios the Bible warns against – such as taking the mark of the beast on their bodies – and not even know it.

- Taken from *Zion’s Hope*; Dr. Michael Weis

## Types of Antichrist

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There are at least two distinct “*types*” of antichrists in history – **Titus**, and **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**. Some eschatology holds that either of these two men could have caused the “*Abomination of Desecration as spoken of by the prophet Daniel*” that Jesus referred to in the Olivet Discourse.

Both clearly desecrated the Jewish Temple with heinous acts – **Antiochus**: slaughtering a pig on the altar, and **Titus**: having sex with a harlot upon the altar. Yet, it seems impossible for it to be Antiochus since he desecrated the Jewish Temple 200 years prior to Jesus’ prophecy. Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple would have come some 40 years following Jesus’ prophecy, leading to the Diaspora of the Jews.

But, when taken together with the other subsequent prophecy of Jesus, Titus does not seem to fit the bill either. It would appear to be yet a future event, with these two candidates as mere foreshadowing “*types*” of antichrists. Although, it is clear that Titus’ actions led to the, prophesied, dispersion of the Jews worldwide in 70 AD.

### Antiochus IV Epiphanes

336-330 BC Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, not Israel. He died at age 33. He ruled Jerusalem from 322 BC. In **168 BC**, a successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, desecrated the rebuilt (second) Temple by **slaughtering a pig on the Jewish altar**. He erected a statue of the pagan god Zeus in the Holy of Holies and demand Jews worship him.

As a result, Mattathias Maccabee led a revolt (Hanukkah commemorates their victory). Epiphanes was clearly a ‘type’ of antichrist, a foreshadowing of the Abomination of Desolation to come.

Zachariah 9:13 When I have ... raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece ...

Post-Millennialists all believe in some variant that **Antiochus Epiphanes** fulfilled Daniel’s prophesied Abomination of Desolation during the Maccabean era.

The problem is that Antiochus Epiphanes never entered into a seven-year covenant with Israel (as we are told the antichrist will one day), even though he promised peace. Furthermore, and most damning, Jesus confirmed it to be a **future event** over 200 years after Antiochus lived.

## Titus

Realizing that the city could not be conquered by storm, Titus decided to vanquish its citizens by starvation, calling for the erection of a wall to seal off all access to the Jews concentrated in the Temple area. At the same time the Romans again erected embankments, which necessitated the carrying of logs over great distances. Many Jews who sought to escape the rigors of the famine were caught and severely tortured by the Romans, who even disemboweled their victims in the hope of extricating gold which they believed the Jews to have swallowed (Jos., Wars, 5:548ff.).

The daily sacrifices in the Temple, which had continued without interruption, finally ceased on the 17th day of Tammuz. At various stages during the battle for Jerusalem, Josephus was sent by Titus to appeal to the Jews to surrender. The Jews scornfully rejected his pleas, but in the end some members of the high priestly families were persuaded to surrender (Jos., Wars, 6:96ff.). Titus harangued his own troops, offering prizes to the first of them to scale the wall surrounding the Temple court, which he set about battering as a prelude to his final assault on the rebels.

Titus' army broke through the walls of Jerusalem after a long siege, during which the food and water supplies to the city were cut off. According to Josephus, when Titus entered the city, his army killed 1,100,000 people within the city, most of whom were Jews; nearly 100,000 more were captured and enslaved, their image forever carved into the bas relief of Titus' Arch.

There is controversy as to whether Titus intended to destroy the Temple in 70 AD. Josephus claims that the destruction of the Temple was initiated when a Roman soldier threw a torch inside its walls, kindling a blaze. Other historical sources believe that Titus had intended all along to destroy the Temple.

Various degrees of responsibility have been assigned to Titus for the events that followed his order (on the Ninth of Av) to set the Temple gates on fire. Josephus relates that (on the eve of the Ninth of Av) Titus called a council of war to determine the Temple's fate, and after hearing divided opinions, decided that it should be preserved. Josephus ascribes the actual setting alight of the Temple to the unauthorized act of a Roman soldier who flung a burning torch at the Temple, and states that Titus' subsequent efforts to persuade his soldiers to extinguish the flames were in vain, their desire for revenge allegedly overcoming their sense of discipline.

The account of *Josephus* described Titus as moderate in his approach and, after conferring with others, ordering that the 500-year-old Temple be spared. According to

Josephus, it was the Jews who first used fire in the Northwest approach to the Temple to try and stop Roman advances.

*Sulpicius Severus*, however, maintains that the destruction of the Temple was the premeditated act of Titus, based on his conviction that its fall would be accompanied by that of the rebellious people, whose fount of strength it was. His source is thought to be the lost writings of Tacitus, to which he lent a Christian interpretation. This version appears to approximate the truth rather than that of Josephus, which was probably written with the desire to clear Titus of blame.

The Temple's destruction signaled the end of organized Jewish resistance and Titus, after capturing also the upper city, ordered the destruction of the whole city and its walls. Only three towers were left as a reminder of past glory. Titus was hailed as emperor by his soldiers; he distributed awards and held a three-day victory celebration and other festivities, including gladiatorial contests, at which many of the Jews who had been taken prisoner were killed.

Titus was crowned emperor of Rome in 79 A.D., less than a decade after his triumph in Jerusalem. Among his achievements as emperor was the completion of the famous Coliseum, which some historians believe was built by Jewish slaves.

It is said in the *Aggadah* (part of classical rabbinic literature of Judaism) that: After the fall of the Temple, Titus entered the Holy of Holies, his drawn sword in his hand, slashed the parokhet, and **spreading out a Scroll of the Law on the top of the altar, had intercourse with two harlots** he had brought in.

“The replacement for Vespasian, the newly crowned Emperor, was the wicked Titus, from whose mouth the verse ‘Where is their G-d, the Rock in Whom they trusted?’ seemed to come. For Titus blasphemed and cursed Heaven!”

“He seized a prostitute, and entered the Holy of Holies, spread out a Sefer Torah, and committed a sin on it. He then took a sword and thrust it into the curtain dividing between the Holy and the Holy of Holies. A miracle occurred and blood spurted forth, causing him to think that he had killed “himself” (where “himself” is a euphemism for Heaven)...”

“He took the curtain and made it like a sack and he brought all the holy vessels from the Temple and put them into it, and placed the curtain with the vessels on a ship for transport to Rome where he would use them to boast (as we see to this day recorded on the Arch of Titus).”

## Assessment

Some contend that **Antiochus Epiphanes** was the antichrist. But, his desecration of the Temple occurred during the Maccabean era, 200 years before Jesus spoke of the “*Abomination of Desolation*” as a future event. Thus, though he desecrated the Temple, he cannot be the antichrist. This leaves Titus.

**Titus** remains a candidate. His destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was a yet forthcoming event to Jesus’ Olivet Discourse prophecy – it occurred some 40 years later. His attack on Jerusalem led to the **Diaspora**. Which is clearly a prophetic event, the 1,878 year “*scattering*” of the Jew among the nations?

The Titus destruction ended the **Jewish sacrificial system**, although it had virtually ceased by this point in 70 AD. Daniel says that the antichrist will “*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.*” Titus did.

Daniel 9:27 And he (antichrist) shall confirm the **covenant** with many for one week (7 years): and in the midst (middle) of the week **he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease**, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

However, Titus did not “*magnify himself above every god.*” Nor was there a time when he was “*worshipped.*”

Daniel 11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and **he shall exalt himself**, and **magnify himself above every god**, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. 37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for **he shall magnify himself above all**.

Revelation 13:4 And they **worshipped the dragon** which gave power unto the beast: and they **worshipped the beast**, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

General Titus succeeded his father, Vespasian, as the Roman emperor in 79 AD. However, Titus’ reign was short-lived, and his brother Domitian succeeded him in 81 AD. The early years of Domitian’s reign were prosperous, and he was well liked. However, in 87 AD, **Domitian** began to **demand that he be worshiped** as lord and god.

Christians were unwilling to submit to this decree. As a result, the emperor instituted a great persecution against the church. John’s exile to the island of Patmos, where he

wrote the Book of Revelation, was part of this persecution. So *Titus did not declare himself a god*; although, his successor, Domitian did.

Furthermore, **John's Book of Revelation** was prophecy, written on the Isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea during Domitian's rule in about **95 AD**. It was well *after* Titus destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. John was writing about a **future** time he saw in his visions, certainly not past events.

Titus destruction of Jerusalem led to a time of intense persecution. A time some contend fits the description of the Fifth Seal, the **Great Tribulation**. Josephus wrote that 1.1 million people were killed during the siege, of which a majority was Jewish. However, the **Jews have faced worse persecution** time and time again over the centuries since the Diaspora began.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) ... 21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was **not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be**. 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.

The Great Revolt of 66-70 AD against Rome that drew Titus to Jerusalem was followed some sixty years later by the Bar-Kokhba revolt in 132–135 AD. In the Bar-Kokhba revolt 580,000 Jews killed, while 50 fortified towns and 985 villages were razed; many more Jews dead as a result of famine and disease. These were two of the greatest calamities in Jewish history prior to the *Holocaust*. None of these events required God to '*cut them short*' to save all flesh. Moreover, none of these tragedies were cut short by anything resembling the Sixth Seal, **Cosmic Disturbances** event.

Matthew 24:21 For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 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**. ... 29 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:

There has been **worse persecution** of the Jews since 70 AD. Thus, the Titus event does not align with what Jesus said about the Great Tribulation, "**such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be**." Consequently, Hitler, ISIS, Mao, Stalin were merely warm-up acts for how severe and devastating the Great Tribulation will be one day.

Furthermore, the antichrist institutes the “**mark of the beast**,” where men could neither buy nor sell without the “*mark*.” The “*mark*” is a sign of allegiance with the antichrist. Titus did nothing along this line.

Revelation 13:16 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:  
17 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.

Jesus warned the inhabitant of Jerusalem to **run** (“*flee*”) when they saw the “*Abomination of Desolation*.” During Titus’ siege of Jerusalem, they could not run for they were under siege by Titus’ armies. Once the walls were breached, the inhabitants were slaughtered.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall **see** the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea **flee** into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

The wholesale slaughter of Jews happened **before Titus desecrated the Temple** with whores. Thus, it is out of order with Jesus’ prophecy. His order is the Abomination of Desolation, then run because the Great Tribulation is about to commence.

Revelation 13:6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to **make war with the saints**, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Lastly, the text holds that the antichrist will enter into a “**covenant**” with the Jews that most believe inaugurates the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. Historically neither Antiochus nor Titus entered into a covenant. So, even Titus fails to meet the criteria on at least seven key points.

Daniel 9:27 And he (antichrist) shall confirm the **covenant** with many for one week (7 years)...

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Therefore, it would seem that **neither Antiochus nor Titus fit the bill** as the antichrist. Both would appear to be merely “*types*” of antichrist. It would seem that there will be a future Jewish Temple and that the sacrificial system will have been reinstated prior to the real antichrist appearing in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel. It is still yet, a future event.

## Midnight Cry

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In the Olivet Discourse, after Jesus' description of the "*these things*" to look for in order to be able "*watch*" for His Second Coming, there is an unusual passage about "*virgins,*" "*lamps,*" "*oil,*" "*bridegroom,*" and a "**midnight cry.**"

Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten **virgins**, which took their **lamps**, and went forth to meet the **bridegroom**. 2 And five of them were **wise**, and five were **foolish**. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took **oil** in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, **they all slumbered and slept**. 6 And **at midnight there was a cry made**, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and *trimmed their lamps*. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, **the bridegroom came**; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and **the door was shut**. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the *Son of man* cometh.

The text is a picture of an ancient mid-eastern wedding; a Jewish wedding. Most take this parable to mean that we must be ready for Christ's appearing. No doubt, we should.

Many folks equate the "*virgin*" with the believer. The "*wise virgins*" were ready; the "*foolish virgins*" were not. But, is that a proper interpretation? Is it the only interpretation? Let's break it down to see if there is more to learn.

### The Oil

Most folks agree that the "*oil*" is a reference to the **Holy Spirit**. That almost seems obvious from Scripture. The Holy Spirit is our "*earnest*" of salvation, and the **power** for believers that came at Pentecost at the birthday of the Church.

The Holy Spirit is our source of direction and power as we walk in this lost world. We are promised by Jesus that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will lead us into all Truth:

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Among the more than 200 times that oil is mentioned in the Bible, it is usually a metaphor of the Holy Spirit's presence. We see this in the ritual anointing of prophets, priests and kings, and those desiring healing. For example, when the prophet-judge Samuel anointed David with *oil* to be the new king of Israel, the next statement is that "*the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.*" (1 Sam 16:13)

In David's case, all his accomplishments subsequent to being anointed by the Spirit are to be interpreted as **empowered** by the Spirit. By contrast, the Holy Spirit had abandoned King Saul because of disobedience. We see the same connection with respect to Jesus' First Coming:

Acts 10:38 How God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the **Holy Ghost** and with **power**: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Every reference to anointing (oil) implies either a plea for the Spirit's action or a revelation of the Holy Spirit's presence to empower individuals. He is the Power; He brings Life and Power to the Word.

Sadly, in today's church, the Holy Spirit is virtually relegated as unnecessary. Our pastors learn in seminary to run a church entirely without the Holy Spirit. Today's church is run like a secular business. We even bring in business operations and planning techniques.

"Our blunder (or shall we frankly say our sin?) has been to neglect the doctrine of the **Spirit** to a point where **we virtually deny Him** His place in the Godhead. This denial has not been by open doctrinal statement, for we have clung closely enough to the Biblical position wherever our credal pronouncements are concerned. ... Brief reference is made to Him in the Doxology and the Benediction. Further than that **He might as well not exist.**" – *AW Tozer*

This is a grievous error. Without the Holy Spirit there is, and can be no, Power. We thusly play church. We pretend to be led by the Holy Spirit. Is there any wonder that our mainline denominations are dead and lifeless?

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came *not unto you in word only, but also in power*, and in the *Holy Ghost* ...

## The Lamp

The “**lamp**” appears in Scripture to be often a metaphor for the **Word of God** – Truth.

Psalm 119:105 Thy **word is a lamp** unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Proverbs 6:23 For the **commandment is a lamp**; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

The parable of the **lamp** under a bushel is one of the parables of Jesus. This is referring to not sharing the Truth of the Gospel, the “Good News;” the Word.

## Seven Lamps (Not in this Text)

Related to the Lamp, are special references to Seven Lamps. These Lamps have oil; we know because they are burning. God also describes **Seven Lamps** “*burning*” which represent the “*Seven Spirits of God*.”

Revelation 4:5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were **seven lamps** of fire burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits of God**.

Revelation 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the **seven Spirits of God**, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Revelation 5:6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits of God** sent forth into all the earth.

The “*seven spirits of God*” appears to be defined in Isaiah:

Isaiah 11:2 And the spirit of the **Lord** shall rest upon him, the spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**, the spirit of **counsel** and **might**, the spirit of **knowledge** and of the **fear** of the Lord;

The prophecy is that the Messiah would be empowered not by seven individual spirits but by the One Spirit, the Holy Spirit, characterized seven ways:

- 1) The Spirit of the Lord
- 2) The Spirit of wisdom
- 3) The Spirit of understanding

- 4) The Spirit of counsel
- 5) The Spirit of power
- 6) The Spirit of knowledge
- 7) The Spirit of the fear of the Lord

Seven is a number of God's perfection in Scripture. The "*seven spirits of God*" in the book of Revelation are thus a reference to the **Holy Spirit** in the *perfection* of His manifold ministry. Thus, this could be rendered the seven lamps of the Holy Spirit. How can we believe that we can live and minister effectively as a church body without Him? We need the lamp (word) with the oil (spirit).

### The Bridegroom

Likewise, it seems abundantly obvious that the "**bridegroom**" who "*tarried*," is a allusion to **Jesus Christ** regarding His impending Second Coming. That is affirmed in verse 13 referring to "*the Son of man*;" referencing Daniel's description of a preincarnate vision of Jesus.

Jesus spoke of Himself as the "*Son of man*" often, speaking in code, as it were, to those who knew their prophecy.

Daniel 7:13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the **Son of man** came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Mark 10:45 For even the **Son of man** came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the **Son of man**, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

### The Sleeping Virgins

But then, who are the "**virgins**?" Theologian R. T. Kendall uses Jesus' parable of the ten virgins to describe the *slumbering condition of the church* in the last days. He believes the virgins are the churches of the last days.

It is interesting that "*they all slumbered and slept.*" Yes, they all "*slept*," not just the "*foolish virgins.*" Could it be that the "*virgins*" are churches, or maybe the body of

Believers? And that the '*midnight cry*' is a final *wakeup call* to the Church in the Last Days?

Consider that a *virgin* is considered spotless, undefiled, and pure. If the "*virgins*" refer to churches, these would be the better, more doctrinally sound, and theologically pure churches. We are not talking about the aberrant apostate church steeped in compromised and false doctrine. Both the "*wise*" and the "*foolish*" are "*virgins*," set apart and undefiled.

Regardless, I do not think anyone would disagree that the average Church today is asleep and slumbering; it is indeed, powerless – even the doctrinally sound. Moreover, we have self-divided into "**Word**" churches and "**Spirit**" churches; in other words, mainline protestant churches and charismatic churches. The "*Word*" camp is focused on the Word and doctrine only, while largely denying the power of God.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but **denying the power** thereof: from such turn away.

The "*Spirit*" churches are so desperate for the power of God – sign, wonders, miracles – that the "*Word*" often takes a backseat. Their emphasis is on getting back to the book of Acts. This latter camp tends to wind up in a host of extremes and aberrant beliefs without being governed by the framework of God's Word; their services are frequently more akin to chaos.

"With the fullness of the Holy Ghost ... evangelical Christianity believes it, but nobody experiences it." – *AW Tozer*

The former tends to want status quo and man-made order; they do not embrace the messiness that comes with the power of the Holy Spirit. This group focuses more on doctrine – the Word only. While there is nothing wrong with emphasizing truth, doctrine and theological correctness, they are often guilty of excluding the Power of God.

Matthew 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in **vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**

## Trimmed Lamps

The text says that the "*all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*" So, all the virgin's lamps had gone out. All trimmed their lamps. It was not just the foolish, but the wise as well. What does it mean to 'trim' a lamp?

An oil lamp has a wick that carries the oil to the flame. Once the lamp goes out, soot and oily ash builds up at the tip of the wick. The wick must be trimmed, cleaned, to allow

the “*oil*” to flow properly again. The “*virgins*” had all fallen to sleep and their lamps had gone out. Thus, they all trimmed their lamps.

As a lamp burns the oil, it burns without consuming the wick. It is somewhat analogous to Moses’ ‘*Burning Bush*.’ The wick is “*not consumed*.”

Exodus 3:2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the **bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.**

It is only when the lamp goes out that the wick must be trimmed. So what is the wick? This may be a stretch, but I take it to mean you and me, the ‘*believer*.’ Remember the Church is the body of believers. To trim the lamp, is to trim the wick.

The Lamp is the Word; we must have the undefiled “*Word*” in us. We, as the wick, must be made clean, pure, spotless and undefiled. We must be in right standing before the Lord. We must submit to God’s refining fire; we must allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify us in order that the Word and the Spirit burn brightly through us.

## Awakening

If the “*lamp*” is the “*word*” and the “*oil*” is the “*power*,” maybe the “*midnight cry*” is a call to bring the two back together in the *unity* of Spirit and Truth. For, it should not be *either/or*, but rather, *both/and*. We need the Spirit for Power and the Word for Truth.

The Spirit empowers the Word. Notice that the “*foolish virgins*” lacked “*oil*,” they had the Word without the Spirit. Does that not sound like our dead mainline churches? The “*wise virgins*” had the Lamp and the Oil, the Word and the Spirit.

The **Midnight Cry** is about the **church awakening** and preaching the gospel with unprecedented power – with signs and wonders again, like the early church. Like Peter in Acts:

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all **boldness they may speak thy word**, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that **signs and wonders** may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

Many are already waking up to realize that, if what we have now is all there is, we are in sad shape. We cannot stay in separate camps. We must come together.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit and in truth.**

What we need is an awakening to both *Power and Truth* – simultaneously. Truth without Power is dead; Power without Truth leads to erroneous extremes. Both the dead word-only church, the unrestrained charismatic movements are **Ishmael**. The true awakening “*in Spirit and in Truth*” will be **Isaac** – the “*child of promise*.”

“How many blessed truths have gotten snowed under. People believe them, but they are just not being taught, that is all.” – *AW Tozer*

What we desperately need is a renewed emphasis on both Word/Truth (lamp) and Spirit/Power (oil) – no longer to be separated by either/or. Then the “*midnight cry*” is likely an awakening with Power like has not been seen before as we enter the last days. Consider Joel’s promise:

Joel 2:28 And **it shall come to pass** afterward, that **I will pour out my spirit** upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids **in those days** will I pour out my spirit. ... 31 ... **before** the great and terrible **day of the Lord** come.

This occurs “*before*” the “*day of the Lord*,” before Christ’s Second Coming. “*In those days*” refers to the last days leading up to Jesus’ return when God will “*pour out [His] spirit*.”

## Ditches

**The old traditions and doctrines of man have blinded the masses from seeing scripture the way God intended.** Both camps have “*thrown the baby out with the bathwater*,” as it were. One camp is denying the power and holds to a lifeless form of religion; the other camp is so desperate for power they ignore God’s Word only to wind up in crazy extremes and false doctrine.

“[Satan] has taken some fanatical, weird, wild-eyed Christians who do things that they shouldn’t, and he has stationed them in the middle of God’s cornfield, and warns, ‘**Now, don’t you go near that doctrine about the Holy Spirit** because if you do, you will act just like these wild-eyed fanatics.’” – *AW Tozer*

They are both in **ditches**, albeit opposite ditches, and as always, the truth lies between the warring extremes. (See: *Ditches*) We will never experience God’s power in Truth until both camp climbs out of their respective ditches and seek the Word and the Spirit. They must move between the warring extremes to the centerline of Truth. We need to gather together in unity on the road of Truth running between the ditches.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came *not unto you in word only, but also in power*, and in the *Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

It is high-time that we came together to seek both the Truth and the Power together. It is but another **Old Tradition** robbing the Church of power. According to Joel, there is coming a day, before Christ returns, when this will happen, when ‘*He will pour out His spirit on all flesh.*’

Sadly, I strongly suspect that those who are not in right standing before God and walking in the Spirit, who are standing proudly in their respective ditches, will miss it. I suspect those who have yet learned to hear God for themselves, will miss it as well.

“The next thing to happen on God's calendar is not the Second Coming but rather **the awakening of the church** before the Second Coming. Matthew 25:6 says, "At **midnight** ['middle of night' - meses de nuktos] there was a cry. ... "**cry**" and the actual coming of the bridegroom (see verses 7-10). The awakening of the **ten virgins** - who I take to **represent the church** in the very last days — precedes the coming of the bridegroom. ... The scary thing about sleep is that you don't know you were asleep until you awake up. ... The midnight cry is coming!" – *RT Kendall*

## Last Trump

The “*Last Trump*” in Scripture is used to announce “*the Day of the Lord*,” Christ's Second Coming. It is a “*great*” “*trumpet*” sounded announcing Christ's return and the gathering of His elect.

1 Corinthians 15:52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the **last trump**: for the **trumpet shall sound**, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Matthew 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

However, it seems that this ‘**midnight cry**’ is not being equated to the “*Last Trump*.” Thus, it is not announcing Christ's immediate coming. Rather, it seems to be a wakeup call to the slumbering church (“*slumbered and slept*”) that His coming is growing near. It is a prophetic call to return to the full gospel.

Kendall believes, “it will be the greatest awakening since Pentecost. When revival comes, three things will happen: nominal Christians become truly converted, sleepy Christians are awakened, and those in the World will be saved.” It is a cry of the Holy Spirit Himself to awaken the slumbering Church to the Word and Spirit.

We have all heard the phrase “*at the stroke of midnight*,” meaning at the last moment before something happens. We may very well be in, or approaching, the last moment. It is a call for an awakening to embrace both *the Word and the Spirit – the Truth and the Power* – before Jesus comes back. The “*virgins*” are awoken at “*midnight*,” meaning the hour was late; or rather, there is little time left.

Mark 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for **ye know not when the master of the house cometh**, *at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning*:

Job 34:20 In a moment shall they die, and **the people shall be troubled at midnight**, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

### **Wigglesworth Prophecy**

The 1947 Smith Wigglesworth Prophecy, if true, may rank among the most important end-time prophecies that the Church has received. It parallels this concept. First, there would be a renewal and restoration of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit along with the Gifts of the Spirit. Many will leave the traditional dead lifeless churches looking for more of what God promised.

Meanwhile, man-centered churches and church movements will wane. Then, there will come about a renewed emphasis on both Word/Truth and Power/Spirit together.

“During the next few decades there will be two distinct moves of the Holy Spirit across the church in Great Britain. The first move will affect every church that is open to receive it and will be characterized by a restoration of the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The **second move of the Holy Spirit will result in people leaving historic churches and planting new churches**. In the duration of each of these moves, the people who are involved will say 'This is the great revival'. But the Lord says 'No, neither is this the great revival but both are steps towards it.'”

When the new church phase is on the wane, there will be evidenced in the churches something that has not been seen before: **a coming together of those with an emphasis on the Word and those with an emphasis on the Spirit**. When the Word and the Spirit come together, there will be the biggest movement of the Holy Spirit that the nation, and indeed the world, has ever seen. It will mark the beginning of a revival that will eclipse anything that has been witnessed within these shores, even the Wesleyan and the Welsh revivals of former years. The **outpouring of God's Spirit** will flow over from the UK to the mainland of Europe, and from there will begin a missionary move to the ends of the earth.”

<http://www.jonasclark.com/revival-history/smith-wigglesworths-rare-1947-prophecy.html>

This seems to be already underway. Sadly, our present method of handling the scripture is effectively blocking the progress of the Spirit-filled Believers, and blocking the re-establishment of the true and complete "*Gospel of the Kingdom*."

"*You will receive **power***' (Acts 1:8a). '*Eagerly desire the greater **gifts***' (1 Corinthians 12:31a). Anything that God has ever done for a soul He will do for anyone else, if the conditions are met. ... **Faith says:** Anything He did anywhere else He will do here; **anything He did any other time He is willing to do now;** anything He ever did for other people He is willing to do for us! ... We walk out in this fullness of the Spirit, if we will **yield and obey.**" – AW Tozer

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I would suggest that, now is the time to **put the Oil back in the Lamp.**

We cannot light the Lamp without the Oil. Without the oil, the Lamp provides no light. There is no Power apart from the Holy Spirit. The Truth becomes just words, just doctrine and theology, without Power. It is merely religion.

Now is the **time to seek God in Spirit and Truth.** Now is the time to bring the Word and the Spirit back together to finish our mission in Power and Truth before Jesus returns. The mainline denominations have something to learn from our charismatic brethren; likewise, our charismatic churches could learn from the Word churches.

We must have "*trimmed [our] lamps*" to be ready for the "*Oil*." In other words, we must again rightly divide God's Word so as to allow the Oil of the Spirit to bring it to life – to light the Lamp of Truth. Our wicks must be made pure, clean, sanctified to allow the Oil of the Spirit to flow through us as He pleases.

The hour is late. Midnight is coming. The cry will be made. We must wakeup and come together before it is too late; before the time has passed. The "*wise*" will hear and obey; the "*foolish*" will continue as they have.

Maranatha!

**Note:** I do not want to get carried away with the metaphors in this parable. RT Kendall says "*a parable does not stand on all four legs.*" Meaning that you can carry metaphors in a parable only so far without making it mean something other than what it was intended to mean.

I pray that I haven't carried the metaphors too far. However, I am confident that there is a deeper meaning in this parable than has typically been conveyed.

Likewise, even if this Matthew 25 parable is not referring to the bringing of the Word and Spirit back together in our churches, the message holds true. We need to bring the Word and Spirit, the Truth and Power, back together to experience all that God intended for the Church to be.

## About the Author

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To be clear, I am decidedly a ‘*nobody from nowhere.*’ In fact, I ‘*do not know much of anything, but I know the One who knows everything.*’ I have learned that He delights in sharing Truth to those willing to seek it. So, I have taken the time to study God’s Word on this and other subjects, in rather great detail. I try to be Berean.

With regards to eschatology, it all began in the late 1980’s. I was in my late twenties. Essentially, I did my PhD in eschatology. Well, not formally. But, I suspect, as you will see, I did more study on this subject than most do for their PhD.

I had grown up under a Godly father who took the study of God’s word very seriously. He was a gifted and highly sought after speaker and a teacher of the Word of God. However, if he spoke on eschatology it was from a Pre-tribulational position. As a child I assumed he had to be correct.

However, as a teenager, I could not see this view clearly in scripture for myself. I always had a subtle gnawing in my spirit that something was amiss. The best I can remember, this is the only Biblical subject that my late dad and I would come to disagree on.

### Thorns

During my late twenties I went through a period of time when everything I heard on the radio, television, from a teacher, or from the pulpit, and everything I would read, was about Christ’s Second Coming. Being a very logical and analytical person, the way God made me, I was troubled greatly that each was saying something very differently. In fact, they were presenting *mutually exclusive* views on Jesus’ return.

I knew that there could be only one correct answer to this dilemma – God’s Word. So I set out to attempt to figure it out. My wife says that “*God will put thorns in your nest to cause you to take the action*” that He wants you to – to jump out of the nest. Boy did He!

You see at this point in my life I was traveling extensively. Many years I was out of town over 100% - meaning, out of town on weekends, holidays, etc. So for me to give my Saturdays to trudge through various libraries, I had to be highly motivated.

I found myself digging through card catalogs. This, you see, was before the Internet, even before cell phones. It is hard to remember, I know. But, in short order I realized that there were six prevalent positions on Jesus’ Second Coming. So I set out to collect

all the “*classic works*” for each position, and to even get as close to primary source documentation as possible.

I began checking out dusty books from the library, ordering books, and buying books at local bookstores. When the dust settled, I had a stack of books well over waist high. I set out to read them. It took me six months. You see, I was not merely reading them; I was dissecting them while following every citation in each book to its context in scripture.

Meanwhile, I was doing my own independent Bible study on the subject using a product called *Logos*. It was a computer study Bible. Those were DOS days, before Microsoft Windows came along, and this was a novel software product for its day. In fact, I wound up consulting with the founders for free – I was running the Coopers & Lybrand’s Information Technology Strategy practice at the time and they were keen for my advice.

Although *Logos* would allow using any translation of the Bible and any of a number of various commentaries, I setup *Logos* with the King James Version (what I grew up on) and a blank database for commentary and cross-references. I was building my own commentary and cross-references.

As I was reading the books, I was simultaneously plowing through scripture on my own accord. It turns out it is a lot to study. Over one third of our Bibles deal with Jesus Second Coming and the events therein. There is seven times more prophecy regarding His Second Coming than His first. It is a lot of material, to be sure.

By the time I was halfway through my stack of books, I started to figure it out. In fact, it was becoming quite obvious, simple and straightforward to me. The sequence of events throughout the Bible was always in the same order. I began wondering why what I had read so far, differed so from what God plainly said. Now I began to suspect that none of these six positions would match up with what I was seeing so clearly.

## **Another Position**

By the time I finished the last book, I was convinced that they were all wrong. Yes, wrong! How could this be? How could these scholars be so far afield of what God plainly said? Why did none of their depictions line up with the clear sequence of events? How could it be that I, a ‘*nobody from nowhere*,’ could see it and these scholarly authors could not? Moreover, why did they not seem to care?

How could I be the only one on planet earth to see it? I felt like Elijah. I was the only one – at least so I thought. All I knew was that it was too simple and these six positions were flat wrong. Now I was a bit upset with God. For, I was convinced that He had led me down this path. Surely, I was not the only one in the world seeing this. It felt like I was.

Then, one Saturday someone put a book in my mailbox in a plain brown envelope, with no name or any identification on it. This was the first of what would be three similar events. The other two were other seeming dead end paths God led me down regarding other subjects. To this day I do not know who; or even if it was the same person, or angels, or how these books wound up in my mailbox. In this case, no one but my wife knew I was doing this study. And, no, it was definitely not my wife.

I carried the envelope into the house that Saturday and tore it open. It was a book describing another position on the timing of Christ's second coming – a seventh position! I said, '*God, really, another position!*' I told Him I would read one more book and then I was done. I have eaten those words, by the way, a couple dozen times or more since.

It was a position call *Pre-Wrath Rapture* by Marvin Rosenthal in Orlando, Florida. He had a messianic Jewish ministry called Zion's Hope. I began to read it and could not stop. He and I were in violent agreement on every word on every page. I read it twice back to back. When I was done the book was bright yellow and underlined from cover to cover. I had written notes and cross references everywhere in it. So I told God, '*okay, there are two of us, big whoop!*'

Well, Rosenthal led me to Robert VanCampen and his book called *The Sign*, to Joel Richardson with all his brilliant books, and others. Turns out there were quite a few of us. Oddly, all these men had the same experience in the late 1980s as I had – how can there be six mutually exclusive positions? Which, if any, is right? They concluded, as I had, that they were all wrong.

Now, they all had big ministries, so they wrote books. I turned my learning into a twelve week teaching series. I have given it many times. Although, over the years I have learned to teach more in thirty minutes to one hour than in the twelve-week class in the early days. Now I teach straight from the Olivet Discourse, and if time permits, show the parallel scripture throughout the Old and New Testaments.

## **Prove all Things**

So what is the point? The point is I did not come to my understanding lightly. All told, it was nearly a year of serious study and research that consumed virtually all of my available time. Sadly, many read a book, and come to believe that they have it all figured out. They believe they are experts.

Few are Berean in their walk with God – for "*they ... searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*"

Acts 17:11 ... they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

I find that few really test what they hear, and what they come to believe, to God's word. If a favorite pastor says it, they tend to simply believe it. They read a compelling book, only to drink in all the author says without question. Few "*prove all things.*"

1 Thessalonians 5:21 **Prove all things**; hold fast that which is good.

Moreover, as I have stated earlier, I do not take this lightly. This subject is important, as we can see from God's emphasis in Scripture and Jesus extensive teaching about His return. God takes it seriously; so should we. Furthermore, I do not take this subject lightly. In fact, I tremble at the prospect of misrepresenting God on this topic.

Revelation 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:** 19 **And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,** and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Jeremiah 14:13 ... the prophets say unto them, *Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine...* 14 Then the Lord said unto me, **The prophets prophesy lies in my name:** I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a **false vision and divination**, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. 15 ... the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, *Sword and famine shall not be in this land;* **By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed.**

These passages make it very clear how seriously God takes his description of end-time events. Those who add to, or take away from, stand in grave danger before God. There could be no greater consequence than to have one's name removed from the Lamb's Book of Life. Thus, I do not share this information lightly or as one who has only casually studied end-time theology. My constant prayer is that God will lead me to "*the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*"

This document is the collection of 35 years of teaching on various aspects of this subject. A few years back, I felt like God was encouraging me to combine all my disparate teachings on this subject into one document. To my surprise, it fit together like a hand in glove. As I dropped the pieces into place, it became an instant, and rather complete, book. I pray you will find it of benefit.



Moreover, I pray that you will do, as I have, by praying that God will lead you to "*the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*" Don't take my word for it, be Berean.