Part 2. Lost in Space and Time
Ch.6 Eschatology – In The End: God

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A Three-Fold Cord
Creation, Redemption & Dominion
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1. Introduction

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, **preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God**, 15 and saying, "**The time is fulfilled**, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Question: What time is fulfilled? How close is "at hand?"

Like every other universal, everyone has an eschatology, a belief about the future. All eschatologies are faith positions because no one but God actually knows the future. Some eschatologies are more organized and detailed than others like in Christianity, Islam, and Marxism. Even then there can be wide differences within systems. Some are just wishful thinking about the future. Most people desire a brighter future, but only some will plan and work toward the fulfillment of that desire.

Many large companies have future planning departments which analyze trends to help provide long-term direction for their organization's long-term decision making. There are some astute observers of trends, and those patterns can be used for long-term projections of economics, social conditions, philosophical and political futures. Culture can be thought of as the collective philosophy of a society.

Birthrates are a powerful indicator of a society's generational eschatology. Effectively, whoever makes the most babies wins! The most visible example today is Europe. Europeans, in many places, have a negative birthrate. By the way, America has recently entered that club. That means more people are dying than being born. On the other hand, Muslims are having many babies, and so, in another generation or two they will outnumber the native populations. The evolutionary, self-centered, Marxist, socialist West has no future and will simply be conquered without bullets.

> Europe today has little desire to reproduce itself, fight for itself, or even take its own side in an argument. By the end of the lifespans of most people currently alive, Europe will not be Europe, and the peoples of Europe will have lost the only place in the world we had to call home.
>
> - By 2015 more British Muslims were fighting for ISIS than for the British armed forces.
> - By 2016 the most popular boy's name in England and Wales is Mohammed.
> - By the middle of this century a majority of Austrians under the age of 15 will be Muslims.
>
> (Murray, Douglas, *The Strange Death of Europe*, 2017)

Other civilizations in the past have been similarly absorbed when a pessimistic view of the future was embraced. Ever hear someone ask, "How could I bring children into this messed up world?" They are displaying a pessimistic long-term view of the future. This is generational eschatology at work. But if, as a society, there is an optimistic, victorious view of the future there will be more babies, making the job of would-be conquerors more challenging. This is precisely why the Catholic church is anti-abortion and anti-birth control. The more the merrier!

Simply put, eschatology is either optimistic or pessimistic. The future is getting brighter, and the adherents can give cogent reasons, or it is getting darker, and those adherents give their reasons. Both cannot be true, but both profoundly effect how people live in the present. This is deeper than just a "perspective." The world will either be more profoundly and positively influenced by the Gospel, or Jesus will need to rescue the survivors.

Underlying a truly optimistic, victorious future must be an optimistic, victorious, biblical eschatology.

Like most American Christians I was taught what is called Premillennial Dispensationalism, also called Futurism. When I first got saved the raging controversy was between the pre-trib, mid-trib and post-tribulation rapture positions. These will be explained shortly. Notice the commonality, the tribulation. I heard of churches splitting over these issues. Proponents of each position demonstrated that the others had no biblical foundation, much less any Scriptural authority. It is not my purpose to delve into those differences right now but show the reason there were so many problems is that the whole system is based on false presuppositions. Years later I heard the question, "What if there ain't no trib?" What? No trib? We have got to have a trib! Or do we?

By the way, I have noticed some people get quite upset at the idea that there may not be a great tribulation in the near future.

Let us, as always, get into the Scripture. Hopefully, if you have gotten this far, you are Bereans, Acts 17:11, searching the Scriptures to see the truth of things.

As a licensed minister there was an expectation that I continue to teach what had been commonly taught. But there were nagging doubts because of Scripture passages that did not seem to fit the standard end-time story. Also, in various studies I found that a variety of skeptics pointing out some of the very same passages as proof that Jesus misled His disciples and therefore cannot be trusted, consequently the Bible itself cannot be trusted. Even the great C.S. Lewis had his doubts.
For example, see:
Matthew 10:16-23
Matthew 16:28, Mark 9:1
Matthew 23:36, 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32
I will look more closely at these in the section "Jesus's Comings" later in this chapter.

Also see:
Ephesians 4:11-13
Acts 2:16-17
Hebrews 1:1-2
1 Peter 1:20

Even the Great Commission itself (Mt 28:18-20), did not seem to fit. I was once talking to a church leader about the Great Commission and pointed out the phrase "making disciples of all the nations." He said, with a straight face, "Oh, Jesus knew we would fail. He knew the Church would fail and have to be rescued at the rapture." What?! Fail? Rescued? Over time, as I studied some other leaders and authors in the Premill (Premillennial) camp, the idea that the rapture was a "rescue mission" was a common feature. This has been called "A pessimistic outlook" of future world history, in contrast to a victorious, "optimistic outlook." We would comfort ourselves by saying, "Yes, we read the end of the book and we win!" This pessimism or optimism has to do with the influence and legacy of the Gospel, the Church, and the power of God in society, over time. All eschatologies can be divided into either optimistic or pessimistic systems. Will the Great Commission be accomplished, or fail? In a plain reading of the Great Commission, we find out the task is to Christianize all the nations. But the interpretation today is to make converts in every country. Stricter people would say to make disciples in every people group. But to Christianize a whole country? Never, it can't be done!

God's purposes are much bigger than rescuing "hell-bound sinners," He wants to restore the family of nations (Rev 21:24). Redemption is for the world God loved so much (Jn 3:16, Rom 8:21-22).

Only years later did I discover that in Christendom there were other ancient, orthodox understandings. Did you know there is a whole world of Christianity outside of America, and they don't often think like us? The theological labels below are fairly recent (a few hundred years) so when we look at early Christians and what they believed we have to look for the ideas that the modern labels represent. It is common to hear "the early Church believed this or that" as though it was monolithic. The truth is that there was a diversity of ideas beyond what would be considered "core Christianity." We tend to judge the rest of the world, both in space and time, by our standards as though we are the only correct Christians. But there is only one standard and plumb line, the biblical standard and the Bible interprets the Bible.

It also needs to be understood the biblical writers had a knowledge base much larger than the average Bible reader today. They wrote about things that were common knowledge to readers in the first century but are completely foreign to readers today. For instance, who were the "spirits in prison" referred to in 1Pt 3:19-20, 2Pt 2:4 and why were they there? See chapter 4, "Origins." Jude actually quotes 1 Enoch in 1:6, 14. There are many references to ideas found nowhere else in Scripture, such as the lake of fire

prepared for the devil and his angels, Mt 25:41. Some of these inform a proper biblical eschatology and outworking of the Gospel.

Another track that has led to this current chapter came from a conference, when one of the speakers on the general topic of "God and Government" asked the question, "Could America be founded again?" He didn't think so. This prompted an exploration of what the founders believed in the 1700s. What was different from then and now? Besides the framers and signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution there was a whole tier of influencers, most of which were smart seminary graduates and preachers. According to David Barton there were about 250. Part of that education was Western political philosophy, including the likes of Christian John Locke. Half of the signers themselves had some seminary training. One of the great mysteries of history is how so many smart people showed up on the American stage at the same time. God's providential care.

So, what did they think with respect to God's plan for the nation and the nations?

The first thing I noticed was the absence of the idea that "Jesus is coming soon." The overall theology was closer to the reviled "Dominion Theology." That is, God in Christ has already won the victory over all things and the future was in Christianizing the nations, thus fulfilling the Great Commission and Psalm 110:1, followed by final judgment. By the way, Psalm 110:1 is the most repeated verse in the Bible. Maybe God is trying to tell us something.

Psalm 110:1

Yahveh said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, **until** I make Your enemies Your footstool."

This is repeated at Mt 22:44, Mk 12:36, Lk 20:43, Acts 2:35, Heb 1:13, 1 Cor 15:25

Notice the time word "**until**" which sets the **time reference** for how long the Son will be seated at His Father's right hand… "**until** I make Your enemies Your footstool." This is the best measure of Jesus's return; How many enemies are left?

In traditional end-times teaching there are no enemies in the millennium, but death is not destroyed, Isa 65:20, Rev 20:14, 21:8. But in the post-millennial view, Jesus is reigning now, and His enemies are being defeated through His Church (when they cooperate). Death will be destroyed when Jesus returns for final judgement, Rev 20:14.

How many nations are Christianized? How close is the Great Commission to being completed (Mt 28:19)? How long until the fulness of the Gentiles will come in (Rom 11:25)? Jesus will not leave the Father's right hand until His enemies have been made His footstool.

1 Corinthians 15:25-26

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy
that will be destroyed is death.

Jesus rules! This is all fulfilled in an ever-increasing fashion, without gaps, as noted below. Yes, there were setbacks, like the Islamic overthrow of the Middle East, North Africa and the Byzantine Empire and the rise of global communism. Right now, we see a decline in the West while in other regions of the world there is incline. But the progress, is as Jesus said, "… like leaven that leavens the entire lump of dough" (Mt 13:33). Slowly, subtly over time.

The birth of America is directly connected to what is now called Postmillennialism, explained below. The decline of America is connected to the abandonment of Postmillennialism and the embrace of Premillennial Dispensationalism, also explained below. The American Church has turned its back on the mission. The deterioration is obvious but the "Why?" is not. Most attempts to answer the why question seem to miss the mark or are superficial or worse, they believe the world is supposed to get bad. Without a proper diagnosis a cure cannot be affected.

Another thing I noticed as I began to study logical thinking and philosophy (I am not a professional.) is that every attempt to teach "we are living in the end times" assumes we are living in the end times. This is called begging the question or circular reasoning. Finding verses in Scripture that say "end times" or

"last days" is said to be proof that we are, in fact, living in the end times. We believe a certain thing and so set out to find the verses to back up the belief. Remember the search for UFOs in the Bible (from the book *Chariots of the Gods*)? This is called eisegesis or reading beliefs into Scripture rather than Scripture telling us what to believe, or exegesis.

It is not possible to prove from Scripture that these are the end times. You may show some circumstantial evidence (like 8 end times verses) or simply believe it, but these don't "prove" anything. Within a week of this writing, I heard a preacher "proving" we were in the end times by reading the eight end times verses and showing some coincidental news clips. I also saw a DVD showing the seven great signs of the end times. They only gave a single verse at the end of the video about Jesus standing at the door (Rev 3:18).

On the other hand, it is easily proved when the last days were. Yes, in the past. Here is a brief introduction:

Acts 2:16-17

16 But **this is what was spoken** by the prophet Joel:17 And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-32).

Hebrews 1:2

has in **these last days** spoken to us by His Son

Both of these authors believed they were living in the "last days." There are many defeaters to overcoming such an idea, beliefs that block seeing something for what it is. The strongest, by far, is the belief that we are living in the end times. Through decades of embellishment, defeaters become embedded in the minds of some people to the extent that it will take the power of the Holy Spirit and the willingness to see the truth of things. This is nothing new. In chapter 3, "How to Study the Bible" I talked about various ways Scripture is distorted and interpretation is driven from external sources.

When the daily news is employed to interpret Scripture, Greg Bahnsen called it "Newspaper Exegesis." This also is nothing new. Read older commentaries, especially about Ezekiel 38-39, to see who the end time bad guys were in their day. By the way, Ezekiel 38-39 is not about Russia, but the book of Esther. The big problem is that as the news changes, so does biblical interpretation. Remember 50 years ago the Russians were end-time bad guys. Even Napoleon and Mussolini were candidates. And before them…? Now it is the Muslims. God is not arbitrary like the prophecy experts!

> "Ezekiel is God's war correspondent for today's newspapers. We have gone through his inspired prophecy in Ezekiel 38-39, with our Bibles in one hand and today's newspaper in the other." (Mark Hitchcock, *The Coming Islamic Invasion of Israel*)

> "Is there any relationship between the events which we read, hear and see in the daily news and biblical prophecy? Yes! Just as when we are traveling and see signs beside the highway telling us what to expect on the road ahead, so also does the Bible provide signs of the times that point to specific events in the future." (Tommy Ice, *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*)

This is a common theme that every major news event in the world, sickness and disease, planetary alignments, earthquakes, tsunamis, political disturbances, even peace accords are used as proof that Jesus is "at the door." Even big predictions are made based on these shaky, transient events. Remember *88 Reasons Why Jesus Will Come In 1988*? In case you missed it, nothing happened. Same with *Blood Moons* by John Hagee. Ever more reasons for the world to reject the Gospel and relevance of the Church.

I wonder how many have actually looked at the context of "the signs of the times."

Matthew 16:1-3

1 Then **the Pharisees and Sadducees** came and **testing Him** asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern **the signs of the times**.

Questions: Who is the audience? When were the signs happening? Could Jesus be talking about a distant time in the future?

2. Three Views on The Millennium – Revelation 20:1-7

There are a variety of variants within and between these broad categories. I have merely presented an overview. It is unfortunate that eschatology is held hostage to these seven symbolic verses in the most symbolic book of the Bible.

a. **Pre-Millennial** – Also called Chiliasm, considered a heresy by some in the early church. Messiah will come and set up a literal 1000 year "millennial" Kingdom. Until then the world will continue to deteriorate (a pessimistic outlook) until that day when Jesus comes to rescue it and becomes King of kings, seated on His throne in Jerusalem. After the millennium comes final judgement.
   i. Classical Pre-Millennialism – Generally agrees with the above, considered more like Post-trib.
   ii. Dispensational Pre-Millennialism – has the added features of a parenthesis (stopped prophecy clock), a 7-year tribulation, a pre-trib rapture, and two chosen peoples. There are at least 7 rapture views:
      1. Pre-trib rapture – rapture happens triggering the prophecy clock and a 7-year tribulation.
      2. Mid-trib rapture – rapture happens at last trumpet, the mid-point of the 7-year tribulation.
      3. Post-trib rapture – rapture happens after tribulation, similar to Classical Pre-Mill
      4. Pre-wrath rapture – rapture happens just before the "wrath of God" is poured out.
      5. Partial rapture – only "our group" or hardest working Christians will be raptured.
      6. Faith rapture – only those believing in the rapture will be raptured.
      7. Pan-Trib rapture – it will all pan out. This is the result of pervasive confusion.

   Only the pre-trib rapture keeps consistent Daniel's 70th week as tribulation theology.

b. **A-Millennial** – millennium is symbolic, Jesus is King of kings now and the world will continue to deteriorate until Jesus comes to save the day at end of millennium and execute final judgement. There are a few "optimistic" A-mills, making it essentially a variant of post-mill (ii) below.

c. **Post-Millennial** – Jesus comes for final judgement after the millennium. There are basically two views:
   i. There will be a literal 1000-year (chiliastic) Christian "golden age" at the completion of the Great Commission, after which Jesus will come to execute final judgement. Called "Golden Age Postmillennialism." Believed by many Puritans, formulated by Jonathan Edwards, but is rare today. Generally, when critics speak against Postmillennialism, this is what they are attacking.
   ii. The millennium is a symbolic long period of time (same as A-mill), Jesus is King of kings now and exercises that rule through His Wife/Church, Mat 16:18, Rev 1:5. The world will come under the increasing influence of the Gospel as the Nations are discipled, Mt 28:18-20. As such, righteousness, peace and prosperity will continue to grow, as it has for the last 2000 years. At the completion of the Great Commission Jesus will come (traditional 2nd Coming) to execute final judgement, separating sheep and goat nations (Mat 25:32, Rev 21:24). This is the majority report of Postmills today.

There are a variety of variants within and between these broad categories. I have merely presented an overview. Broadly, Jesus returns before or after the millennium. All A-mills are actually Post-mill. Amillennialism is a variant of Postmillennialism.

I would like to make another broad distinction. That is between eschatological systems and the general conditions in the world. By systems, I mean the big picture ideas represented by eschatological systems. The broad distinction is this: optimism and pessimism. Another way to say it: Optimillennialism or pessimillenialism. Will the world descend into increasing darkness until Jesus comes to save the day? Or will it ascend into the increasing Light of the Gospel? What kind of world will your great-grandchildren inherit? What will be the general condition of the world when Jesus next returns?

World conditions are constantly changing. Peace and conflict ebb and flow. So, one could hold an optimistic outlook, by faith, even during the Roman persecutions of the first few centuries, the fall of the Roman Empire, when Europe lost half its population during the black plague of 1350, or the Islamization

of the Byzantine Empire in 1450, WWI, WWII, and more. Those tragic events were not "the end of the world" even though many thought so, and some even made such predictions. But God had plans well beyond those times. "Newspaper exegesis" (deriving Biblical interpretations based on the news of the day) has been common all through church history. Every generation had tried to fit the Bible into their generation. All have failed and sowed much of the confusion of today. But God's Word and Plan are not dependent on the machinations of man. God (who knows all from beginning to end) is never surprised by human activities.

3. **Four Views on Biblical Prophecy, Particularly the Book of Revelation.**
   a. **Idealist or Spiritual** – prophecy is just there to teach us lessons about the struggle of good and evil, and there are many lessons one can learn. But there is no real connection to future history being laid out. This can become the default position because there are so many competing or conflicting ideas people give up trying to understand and settle for "lessons."
   b. **Historicist** – prophecy covers the span of history from the ascension of Jesus in Acts 1 to His return for final judgement, Rev 19. This was developed in the centuries leading up to the Reformation. I heard one historicist preacher say he thought we were at the 5th seal, Rev 6:9-11. He expected a worldwide persecution of the church to break out any minute. That was around 1983. This view must be constantly adjusted to fit the times.
   c. **Preterist** – most, but not all, prophecy has already been fulfilled in the past, by 70 AD, the time of the Jewish temple's destruction Mt 24:2. Jesus came in judgment, as He said. Jesus will still return for final judgment at the traditional "2nd Coming." Also called Orthodox or Partial Preterist.
   d. **Futurist** – most prophecy (Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21, 2Th 2, Rev 4-19, Ezek 38-39, etc.) will be fulfilled sometime in the future. This is inherent in Classical Pre-mill but is much more pronounced in Dispensationalism. The rapture is not the second coming.

Keep in mind that these are the most general forms and that there are a whole host of sub-species for each. Every year, new books are published offering some new twist as the real truth. As is often the case, versions "not like us" are considered heretical, or at best unorthodox.

Some really are heretical, such as hyper or full preterism which says ALL Bible prophecy was fulfilled by 70 AD. There is no future return of Christ and final judgment is past. The most serious problem with full-preterism is that the current sin is left intact for all eternity with no future triumph over evil. There is no future victorious conclusion, in any form. For a brief while, I met with a group in Colorado to understand their message. I find that most criticism of Orthodox Preterism is aimed at these people. Critics don't bother to look deeper to see the profound differences but assume superficial similarities as "same-ness." One guy told me Preterism has only been around for 60 years. He was talking about hyper-preterism and was completely ignorant of the history of Orthodox Preterism. I have only met a few pastors that have even heard of preterism, or any of the other views above, for that matter. But everyone has heard of Dispensationalism, if not by name, by concept: end-times, tribulation, pre-trib rapture, anti-Christ, etc. Such is the current state of Christian (mal)education. But it is changing.

Note that only post-millennialism offers a positive outlook to a lost and dying world. Jesus Christ, with and through His Church/Wife and the power of the Gospel (Rom 1:16) is sufficient to transform the world and make it a better place for everyone. This is an optimistic Gospel. Give a good listen to some of the old Christmas carols and pay attention to the words of victory that permeate the songs. "Joy To the World" springs immediately to mind, "Let earth receive her King" written by Isaac Watts in 1719. It is one of the most republished carols in history. Also, and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." "…glory to the newborn King" Also the fourth verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Read the words closely. This is victorious postmillennial vocabulary consistent with the time.

The others teach that the world is getting worse and worse, such that Jesus will have to come and rescue what is left of the righteous (no flesh saved, Mt 24:22). This is a pessimistic Gospel. There is no

hope for the world except that individuals must get saved so as to not be "left behind" and suffer in the coming great tribulation. Who would want to be part of an organization doomed to fail? The shortened view of history (Jesus can come any minute) has reduced the Church's only job function to getting people saved and has allowed evil to flourish.

> Christian author and pastor John MacArthur writes: "We are interested in people becoming saved. **That is our only agenda**…. It is the only thing that we are in the world to do." Then, "We don't win down here, we lose. You ready for that? Oh, you were a post-millennialist, you thought we were just going to go waltzing into the kingdom if you took over the world? No, we lose here — get it. It killed Jesus. It killed all the apostles. We're all going to be persecuted. … We don't win. We lose on this battlefield, but we win on the big one, the eternal one." Quoted in Jon Zens and Cliff Bjork, *A Better Society Without the Gospel? The Unbiblical Expectations of Many Christian Leaders*, Searching Together 27:1, 2, 3 (Spring-Fall 1999), 12.

This explains why so few Christians are involved in key positions of authority. They simply don't believe they should be there, and those that are don't believe they should be exercising their power and authority in Christ. They are told to check their religion at the door via the separation of church and state. Interesting that the atheists are free to practice their religion in full public view, and political force. There is virtually no pushback from the church against the deterioration seen in the world. Witness the near total compliance when the churches were recently ordered to close their doors. There is direct social and cultural impact that follows as the Sociology of Eschatology plays out. See section d. below.

The contrast between the two major systems, preterism and futurism, is so stark, so polar, they function as different worldviews (really continent views) within the Christian worldview, in that all of reality is colored by these divergent mindsets. There is no neutral ground. Often discussions are like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. I get frustrated when preachers don't even want to look at scriptures. They often want to vent opinions and beliefs rather than "It is written…"

4. The Rapture

It should be noted that "The Rapture" is not generally pictured as a single event. Most commonly, it is a package of events that starts with the removal of the Church from off the earth, restarted prophecy clock, then antichrist, rebuilt temple, and tribulation. Often, when one criticizes the package of events of Dispensationalism, defenders accuse the critic of denying the return of Christ.

This is called **equivocation**, when two different meanings of a word or idea are treated as the same thing and are switched in mid-discussion. This is why defining terms is so important, to keep everyone honest. The purest form of "rapture" is simply meeting Jesus in the air (1Th 4:17), not what follows after.

The Bible says:

> **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**
> 13 "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. 18
Therefore comfort one another with these words."

This is the famous "rapture" passage. The first thing, for any passage, is to **note the context**.

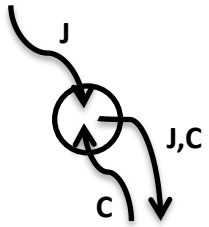
- Temporal context: When was it written?
- Audience context: To whom was it written?
- Conditional context: Why was it written?

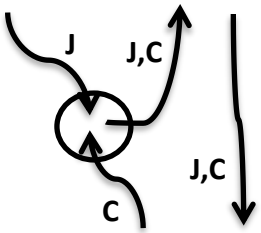
Verses 13 and 18 bracket the reason: to comfort the minds of those that lost loved ones. The believers in Thessalonica had suffered severe persecution. Some were killed. Paul is reminding them of that aspect of the Gospel that says we have entered eternal life when we are "born from above." Their loved ones are safe with Jesus, and they will one day be reunited. Only their body is "sleeping."

2 Corinthians 5:8
We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

In the rapture passage, there are **no indications** of when the rapture might take place. There is a sequence of events once the rapture begins but nothing to say when it will happen.

Below are two diagrams that describe the event above. J = Jesus, C = Church. The left diagram was the basic understanding for most of Church history. The right diagram came into being in 1830. They are not the same!





As the passage describes, Jesus descends to earth while His Church rises to meet Him in the air. Immediately they all return to earth for either a 1000-year rule (classical pre-mill) or final judgment (post-mill). This passage does not indicate which, or even the timing. It becomes necessary to look elsewhere for clues.

Again, Jesus descends to earth while His Church rises to meet Him in the air. The 1830 twist is that Jesus, with His Church, leaves the earth and goes back to Heaven, "the rapture of the Church." Meanwhile, on earth, the tribulation commences for 3½ to 7 years. At the conclusion of the tribulation, Jesus and His Church return to earth to rescue survivors and set up a 1000-year Kingdom. Again, the passage does not say anything about this. It must be constructed from ideas beyond the text.

Observe the word "meet" in verse 17 "to meet the Lord in the air." This is an important word. It is also used in Mt 25:1-10 in "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." The call was given to go "meet" the approaching groom. The virgins didn't go away with the groom; they escorted the groom back to the local wedding place. Sometimes an appeal is made to a Jewish tradition that says the groom took the bride back to where he came from. Not quite. The virgins were already at the wedding place and waiting for the groom to come to them. Their job was to go out to meet the groom and escort him back to the point of their origin, not His. Also, the virgins were not the bride. The bride would have been at the wedding place also waiting for the groom to come. Further, note that the groom leaves his father and mother to be joined to his bride (Gen 2:24). Time does not allow me to get into the past fulfillment of the wedding feast but simply say, "Hello bride" (Mt 19:5, 22:1-7, Mk 10:7, 1Cor 6:17, Eph 5:30, Rev 21:9). It is already done!

There is also a Roman tradition in which a returning, victorious general would camp some miles from the city. He gave the city officials time to prepare a victory arch, clean up the city, and make everything ready. At a certain appointed time, the city officials would go out to "meet" the general and escort him back to the city for a great celebration. BTW, a defeated general or king may pull the victorious general's chariot into the city, on his hands and knees. This is the language implied in Col 2:15.

Colossians 2:15
Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Dispensationalism creates an artificial urgency or imperative.

Christians, over the last 100 years, have been living under the artificial pressure of "Jesus is coming soon." Get it done, get it done, get it done, pressure, pressure, pressure. Jesus will come when the last soul is saved. "It could be you. It could be tonight."

Instead of learning how to live in the seasonal flows of the Holy Spirit, within the Kingdom of God (there is no Kingdom yet, according to dispensationalism, see below), learning how to live the Spirit filled life that transforms us and the world. This is a clue as to why Christians lack influence and why we can't redirect the culture. Any kind of victory, dominion or prosperity is denounced. This has also led to a poverty spirit, in which Christians never really learn about conducting Kingdom business (Lk 19:13). The demonstration of Kingdom ability and wisdom is completely lacking in the world. After all, we are not supposed to be involved with such worldly things. And the people suffer.

There is never a conclusion, so date setting is particularly pernicious and perennial. Every event on the world stage – like earthquakes, disease, wars and even peace – is interpreted as "signs" of Jesus's imminent arrival. A false goal is set forth, then fails, then another, then another, on and on. A new date, a new book, more lost sheep, and a world that doesn't want to hear any more lies. How is it that the people of truth are so often wrong? Skeptics love this. Under this artificial urgency, people are manipulated (witchcraft) and mobilized to accomplish the ends of the false prophets, doing things they would not ordinarily do. They are pressured into getting saved, witnessing, funding projects, etc. Missions and crusades push for the urgency of the final harvest. Some have forgone college, family, and starting businesses for the sake of the cause, all with Scriptural references, of course. Like living on adrenalin, burn out is inevitable. Instead of being witnesses within the culture, we shout from the outside, "Don't get left behind!" The Christian retreat from the world has left a vacuum that evil has been free to fill.

One objection to the post-millennial position is the lack of pressure to be holy. More coercion. This is bad fruit and the opposite of the non-coercive, leavening, salt, and light nature of the Kingdom of God.

5. The Kingdom Age is still in the future. Not!

The idea is that the Jewish leaders rejected King Jesus (Jn 19:14-15), so He took His Kingdom and left. This demonstrates a remarkable ignorance of who King Jesus is and for God's prophesied global redemptive plan in which Jesus not just King the Jews, but is the King of ALL nations, NOW, (Is 9:6, Jer 10:7, Dan 2:44-45, 7:13-14, 1Tm 6:15, Rev 1:5), from the moment of His birth (Jn 18:37). Those that believe the Kingdom Age is still in the future are incapable of conducting business in His name. And the world suffers.

> **Mark 1:14-15**
> 14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The **time is fulfilled**, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**. Repent, and believe in the gospel."
>
> John the Baptist came preaching that the "Kingdom of Heaven" was "at hand" and Jesus sent out the Twelve and the Seventy to do the same, but the Jewish people rejected their King, and the setting up of the Kingdom was postponed. There cannot be any Kingdom until the "Nobleman Farmer" who has gone into a "far country" to receive the Kingdom returns. Luke 19:11-27.
> (Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, chapter 11, "What the church is not: 2. It is not 'The Kingdom'").

Questions: Where in Scripture does it say the Kingdom was postponed? When did the Nobleman Farmer get His Kingdom?

Dispensationalism teaches that the Kingdom can only exist with the literal, physical presence of King Jesus. Jesus must be seated in a physical throne, in a physical rebuilt temple in a physical Jerusalem in a physical Israel. So, we are currently living in the "Church Age," and until the King comes the "Kingdom Age" cannot begin. By the way, notice that this view requires the Kingdom of God to be forced unto the world, as contrasted to the postmillennial view in which much of the world will freely embrace the lordship of Jesus, without coercion.

So, I have another question; Where in the Bible does it say that? The New Testament pictures Jesus as seated on a throne after His ascension (Acts 2:29-36, Heb 1:1-8). More in chapter 8, "Dominion."

> "[Jesus's] role as the Ruler of all the earth's kings and kingdoms is still future, to be achieved after His victory over the beast and false prophet. ... Just as Christ has the right to rule, though He is not yet taken His throne as King, so we..."
> (*Revelation* by John Walvoord and Philip E. Rawley, "Salutation" 1:4-8)
> John Walvoord (1910-2002) was a former president of Dallas Theological Seminary and prolific author of many Classical Dispensational prophecy books.

> "Strictly speaking, the Church has no mission; for God has never commissioned her as a corporate body to undertake any task whatsoever."
> "Another error to be avoided in connection with this subject is the supposition that the Divine purpose in this age is the conversion of the world. ... is said to be made possible only by His personal presence and immediate power."
> (Lewis Perry Chaffer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, *Major Bible Themes: Present Forty-Nine Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures*, chapter 36, "Intro")

Really? Then what is the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20) all about?

> **Matthew 3:1-2**
> 1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

> **Matthew 4:17**
> From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

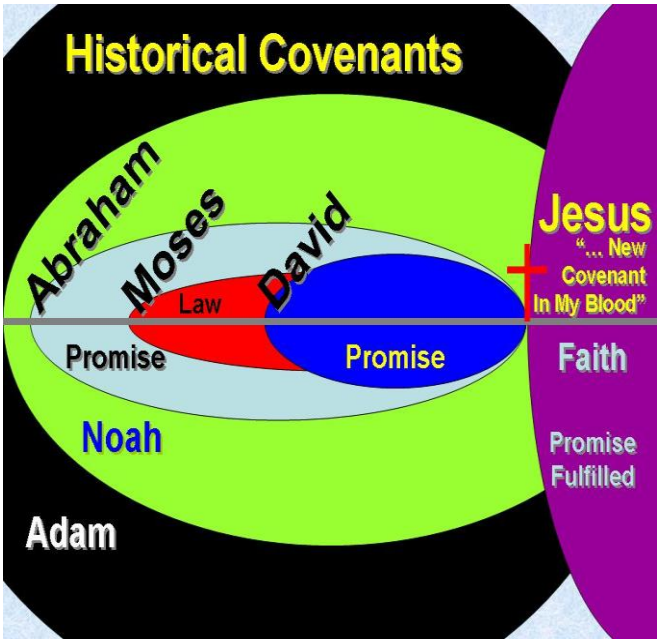
> **Acts 1:1-3**
> 1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them **during forty days** and **speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God**.
> **Questions**: How close is "at hand"? Why would John the Baptist and Jesus open their ministries announcing the Kingdom had come, and Jesus concluded His earthly ministry with teaching on the Kingdom, and then take it away for some unknown future date?

> **Matthew 6:33**
> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
> **Question**: Why would Jesus tell us to seek what doesn't exist?

The Kingdom arrived with the King in Bethlehem in 3 BC, (Jn 18:33-36).

a. The Overlap of Two Ages.

Download the graphic here: http://www.criticalmass.pro/resources/mph/promiselawfaith.htm



The concept of ages does not always carry a strict boundary, as the Dispensationalists would have you believe, as history is more covenantal than dispensational. Many of the covenants overlapped other covenants. The strictest boundary was at the Cross, where the Old and the New do not overlap, even though the Old continued on in the natural for another forty years, ending when the temple was destroyed.

The Bible describes two separate completion events, both called "the end of the age" and are depicted by the graphic below. The first is the end of the Mosaic, law, or stone temple age. The second is the end Church, Kingdom, or Millennial age and culminates with the return of Jesus for final judgement. It is the end of the world or final judgment. Between the Cross and the destruction of the temple was a overlap of the Mosaic and Church ages.

There is another precedent for an overlap of the two ages. Consider the Saul/David kingship overlap of about 13 years, from the anointing of David as king to the death of King Saul, (1 Sam 16:1-13, 31:1-6).

As part of this examination, we must look at the word "age(s)" as used in the New Testament, (128 times, G165 αιωυ, aion, we get the word "eon"). This is a time word and "end of the age" is often erroneously translated in "end of the world." BTW, the phrase "forever and ever" is the Greek idiom literally "the age of the ages." I will comment on ways to verify which "end of the age" some particular verses are talking about. Also, other verses that refer to the end of something, or a time of judgement. In every case we are looking for timing indicators, so we know what end, or event, is being referenced. This will be important for your own personal study. As always, context rules! As it turned out, there are more references for the "end of the world" than the "end of the Mosaic age." Here are some examples:

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority** has been **given to Me** in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, **even to the end of the age**." Amen

Question: What "end" is he talking about? What age?

The Hyper-Preterist cult sometimes uses this passage to say that the time of Gospel preaching ended at the "end of the age" in 70AD. They see every "end" as the same event in 70AD. It was this challenge that got me to thinking about the "two ends" to which the Scriptures refer. As part of the Great Commission, the "Gospel Age" will continue until all the Nations of the world (not just the Roman Empire, Mt 24:14) are discipled, which dates well beyond the destruction of the temple in 70AD.

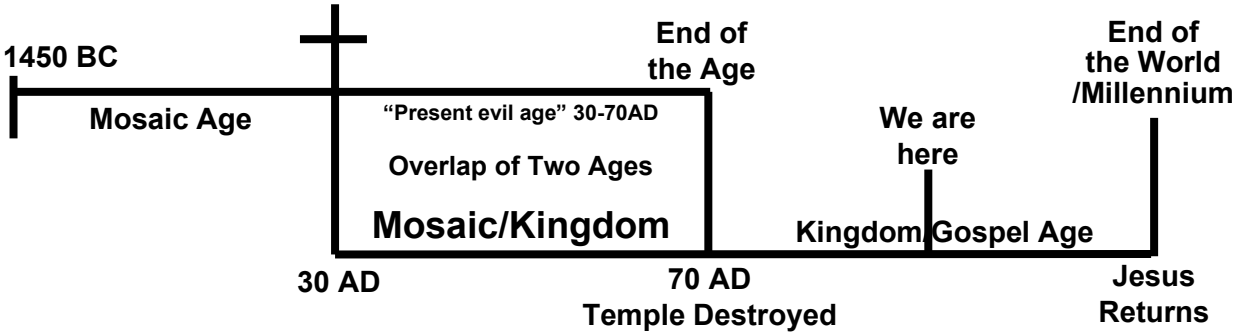
Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in **all the world** as a witness to all the nations, and **then the end will come**.

Question: What "end" is he talking about? See Mt 24:34 for context and "all the world" doesn't mean the whole planet. Same as Lk 2:1-2, it means inhabited earth or Roman Empire. Details later.

Matthew 3:7
But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from **the wrath to come**?"
Question: What does John mean, "wrath to come?" How soon? Rev 1:7
A subtle implication of John's message is that his baptism could save them from the wrath to come.

Acts 24:15
I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be **a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust**.
Question: Is this a "last day" reference? How can we know? Rev 20:12



The Two Overlapping Ages

i. The Overlap Period

The approximately 40 years (~30AD – 70AD) between the Cross and the destruction of the temple was a time of great upheaval. This was the time Paul refers to as the "present evil age," Gal 1:4. It was the waning of the Mosaic/Law Age and the waxing of the Church/Kingdom Age. The Gospel was proceeding "to the Jew first," (Acts 3:26, 13:46, Rom 1:16, 2:9-10, 9:27, Heb 8:8-12), as was proper, until the destruction of the temple. There were three groups during this time, the unbelieving Jews, unbelieving Gentiles (Nations), and the Church (1Cor 10:32). The number of Jews and Gentiles entering the Kingdom was rapidly growing and they were learning how to live together as one in Christ (1Cor 12:13, Gal 3:28-29). Persecution, particularly by the unbelieving Jews, was nonstop throughout the Roman Empire, with Nero Caesar picking up the mantle during his reign which ended in 68AD. The seeds of early heretical movements were also taking root. This was one of the motivating factors for the New Testament being written and distributed, that there would be an objective historical and theological record, "that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed," Luke 1:4.
Mt 10:23, 16:28, Lk 18:29-30, Act 14:1, 19:10, 17, 20:21, Rom 3:9, 29, 8:18, 11:5, 16:20, 1Cor 1:24, 2:9-10, *10:32, 2Cor 4:4, *Gal 1:4, 1Tm 6:17-19, Tt 2:11-14, Heb 9:8-9, 1Jn 5:20

ii. The End of the Mosaic/Law/Stone Temple Age

Of course, the Law Age began with Moses when he received the law from God on Mt Sinai about 1450 BC, (Ex 20, Gal 4:25). The descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob called Israelites, accepted and pledged to obey God's Law, (Dt 4-6). Covenant faithfulness was the condition to remaining in God's favor, and in the promised land, (Lev 18:28, 20:22). Most didn't obey, but there was always a faithful remnant. Remember, Jesus, the Messiah, was the purpose of the Israelite lineage in fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham, (Gen 12:1-3, Gal 3:16-18) and was God's plan from the beginning, (Rev 13:8).
This age ended with the Wrath of God, the destruction of the temple, (Mt 24:1-2, 21), and burning of Jerusalem, in 70AD, (Mat 21:40-46, 22:7, Act 2:16-21), again.
Verses indicating the end of the stone temple age (granted some may appear subjective) are:

Mt 23:36, 24:2-3, 34, 26:29, Mk 13:2, 30, Act 2:16-17, 6:14, 1Cor 10:11, 2Cor 4:4, 1Ths 5:4, 2Ths 2:3, 2Tim 3:1, Heb 1:1-2, 9:26, 10:25, Jam 5:3, 1Pet 1:20, 2Pet 3:3, 1Jn 2:18, Dan 9:24-27, 12:9.

iii. The End of the Church/Gospel/Kingdom/Millennium/Living Temple Age

The Church Age began within 50 days of the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Technically, the Church Age was born on the Day of Pentecost, but Jesus had already received the Kingdom by the time, Mt 28:18. I think it was immediately following the garden ascension, Jn 20:17, when Jesus ascended to the Father. 40 days later Jesus ascended from Bethany, Lk 24:50-51.

This age will end at the return of Jesus for final judgment, at the completion of the Great Commission.

Verses indicating the end of the living temple age (granted some may appear subjective): Mat 7:22, 13:39-40, 48, 16:27-28, 22:23-32, 25:31-33, 28:20, Mk 1:14-15, 12:23, Lk 2:11, 10:12, *20:35-36, Jn 5:28-29, 6:39-40, 44, 54, 11:24, 12:48, Act 1:3, 9, 17:31, 24:15, Rom 2:16, 1Cor 15:21-28, 2Ths 1:9, 2Tim 1:12, 4:8, Jude 14, Rev 1:5, 14:7

The post-millennial age is called "The Resurrection" (Mt 22:28, Mk 12:18, Lk 20:33), or "Age to come" or "that age" (Mt 12:32, Mk 10:30, Lk 18:30, 20:35-36, Heb 6:5).

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, **even to the end of the age**." Amen

Daniel 12:13

But you, go your way **till the end**; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the **end of the days**.

b. The Kingdom and Healing

Matt 4:17, 23, 9:35 Luke 9:2, 11, 10:9

6. Some Key Concepts

a. Six Splits of Dispensational Pre-Millennialism from the historical understanding

i. Daniel's 70 Weeks, Dan 9:24-27 is the only passage in all of Scripture to suggest a 7-year tribulation and is, therefore, the lynch pin passage for the entire futurist "end-times" structure. The final 70th week was separated from the first 69 and pushed into the distant future. The intervening time period is called a "parenthesis," the time when the "prophecy clock has stopped." The clock will resume at the rapture. This was first proposed during the counterreformation Council of Trent in 1585 by Francisco Rivera, then revived and popularized by Edward Irving (1792 – 1834) then taught to John Nelson Darby around 1825, then later by C. I. Scofield and F. J. Dake. Also promoted heavily by the Brethren denomination, Moody Bible Institute, and Dallas Theological Seminary, BIOLA and more.

ii. Two "Second" Comings – The rapture and triumphal returns are separated by tribulation period taught by John Nelson Darby around 1830.Final judgement happens after the Kingdom Age.

iii. Two Chosen Peoples – John Nelson Darby taught that God has two chosen peoples: a natural people, the ethnic Jews, and a spiritual people, the Christians. Mel Couch, "The Rise of Anti-Semitism, The Rustling of the Leaves," *Conservative Theological Journal*, and Hal Lindsey's *The Road to Holocaust* say the denial of a special privileged position for ethnic Jews is considered anti-Semitic, and many other leading Dispensationalists agree. Apparently, flesh does count with God. See One new man, Gal 3:28, Eph 2:15, Col 3:11. But more than that, the promises fulfilled in Christ, are now denied Him and the claim is that those supposedly unfulfilled promises belong to the ethnic Jews. Christ has been robbed of what is rightfully His. See **b. God's Supposed Unfulfilled Promises to National Israel** below.

iv. Two Salvation Plans – one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles. Not so popular today.

v. Two Thrones – The Father's current throne in Heaven and the Son's future throne in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem on earth for 1000 years. No where does the NT say Jesus rules on earth.

vi. Two Resurrection Days – First resurrection of dead Christians and resurrection of the other dead a thousand years later. Here are some references to the resurrection of the just and the unjust at the same time (Mt 22:23-32, 25:31-46, Jn 5:28-29, 11:24, Acts 24:15). The new birth is the first resurrection (Rom 6, Eph 2, Rev 20).

b. God's Supposed Unfulfilled Promises to National Israel

Question: Are ANY of God's promises unconditional or unfulfilled?

There are a few passages that say the promises are "forever" and don't mention conditions. But to take those as absolute is seriously flawed exegesis. The parallel passages that include conditions are conveniently ignored, as is the New Testament. There is only one unconditional promise to the Jews in the OT: the promise that one of David's Seed will be on the throne forever, 2Sam 7:16: Jesus Christ!

Genesis 15:18
18 On the same day Yahveh made a covenant with Abram, saying:
"**To your seed** I have **given this land**, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates…"

Psalms 105:7-11
7 He is Yahveh our God; His judgments are in all the earth. 8 **He remembers His covenant forever**, the word which He commanded, for **a thousand generations**, 9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac, 10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an **everlasting covenant**, 11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance,"

Jeremiah 31:35-37
35 Thus says Yahveh, Who gives the sun for a light by day, The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, And its waves roar (Yahveh of hosts is His name): 36 "If those ordinances depart From before Me, says Yahveh, Then the seed of Israel shall also cease From being a nation before Me forever." 37 Thus says Yahveh: "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, says Yahveh.

These verses are often quoted to say that Yahveh gave this land, unconditionally, to "Abraham and his seed" forever and so Israel has a divine right to the land in the middle east forever. It is the Jewish promised land forever. But is that true? No one asks why they weren't there for almost 1900 years. Quite

simply, the wrath of God, in fulfillment of His other promises. All of the land promises are conditional: covenant faithfulness.

Many of those promises say that Yahveh will drive them from HIS land with the same zeal He brought them in, Dt 4:26-27, 28:62-64, Lev 18:28, 20:22, 26:33, Isa 24:5-6, Ezek 33:25-29, Neh 1:8, for their covenant unfaithfulness. This subject could fill multiple books, and has, so what is here is extremely simplified. Let's look at a more inclusive picture. Who is the "seed of Abraham" to whom the promises were made?

Romans 4:13
For the promise that he would be the **heir of the world** was not to **Abraham or to his seed** through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Galatians 3:7
Therefore, know that **only those who are of faith** are sons of Abraham.

Galatians 3:16
Now to **Abraham and his Seed** were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of **many**, but as of **one**, "And to **your Seed," who is Christ**. See Gen 15:18

2 Corinthians 1:20
For **all the promises of God in [Christ]** are **Yes**, and **in [Christ] Amen**, to the glory of God through us.

Matthew 21:43
Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be **taken from you** and **given to a nation** bearing the fruits of it.

What does the OT say about God's promises?

Joshua 21:43-45
43 So **the Lord gave to Israel all the land** of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 **The Lord gave them rest all around**, according to **all that He had sworn to their fathers**. And not a man of all their enemies **stood against them**; the Lord **delivered all their enemies** into their hand. 45 **Not a word failed of any good thing** which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. **All came to pass.**

Joshua 23:14
Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **not one thing has failed** of all the good things which Yahveh your God spoke concerning you. **All have come to pass** for you; **not one word of them has failed**.

1 Kings 4:21
So **Solomon reigned** over all kingdoms **from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt**. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. Also Gen 15:18-21.

1 Kings 8:54-56
54 And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to Yahveh, that he arose from before the altar of Yahveh, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a

loud voice, saying: 56 "Blessed be Yahveh, **who has given rest** to His people Israel, **according to all that He promised**. **There has not failed one word of all His good promise**, which He promised through His servant Moses.

Nehemiah 9:22-25
23 You made their sons numerous as the stars of heaven, and You brought them into the land Which You had said for their fathers to enter and possess. 24 So their sons entered and possessed the land. And You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, And You gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them according to their desire.

c. The Parentheses

According to Dispensationalism, prophecy stopped on or about the Day of Pentecost. It will resume following the rapture. Sometimes it is said "The prophecy clock stopped." We are now living in a prophetic parenthesis, also called the Church Age. According to Dispensational theologians, all prophetic activity has ceased until the rapture. If this were true how could there be any "signs of the times"? Another contradiction in the system.

However, Mr. and Mrs. Jesus Christ rule the earth now (Rev 1:5, 20:4, 6) with an ever-expanding influence (Is 9:6, Dan 2:35). No parentheses are needed or authorized in Scripture.

Gap theories are not new to dispensational theology. One is "The Gap Theory" or "Pre-Adamic Race Theory" which says there is a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 in which the first humans lived and were destroyed in Lucifer's Rebellion. Promoted by C.I. Scofield, Clarence Larkin, F.J. Dake, and others. This is to accommodate millions of years and fossils. What follows Genesis 1:2 is a re-creation or re-building story. But notice that the external idea of "millions of years" is being eisegetically imposed on the text. Also, other Scriptures must be manipulated to accommodate this external belief. That means there is a higher authority than Scripture. Much like the old flat-earth theory; an idea in search of Bible verses. From chapter 3, "How to Study the Bible", this procedure is called "eisegesis" or reading opinions into a text. The same is true for the prophetic parentheses. The prophetic parentheses are necessary for the Dispensational system to function and would collapse without it. But Scripture offers no authority or support for such gaps. They only exist in the vain imaginations of men (2Cor 10:3-5).

Daniel 2:35
…And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Isaiah 9:6-7
6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice, from that time forward, even forever.
(See also Mt 3:3, 4:3, Mk 1:14-15)

Over the last 2000 years there has been a marked decline in poverty and increase of justice, law, and order worldwide. Every nation has a sense of justice, but America was the first to intentionally embody biblical principles into the governmental order.

Matthew 13:31-32
31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (See also Mk 4:30–32; Lk 13:18, 19)

Matthew 13:33
33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened." (Lk 13:20-21)

Luke 19:12-13, 15-17, 27
12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country **to receive for himself a kingdom and to return**. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Conduct business till I come.'
15 "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, '**Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities**.'"
27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me."

The King received His Kingdom while away and **business was conducted without interruption** until the King returned. The reward for profitable business was civil government (rule the nations). So much different from today. At the return of the King the books are balanced, and judgment is executed. But even further, Jesus was born a King.

John 18:33-36
33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" 35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?" 36 Jesus answered, "**My kingdom is not of this world**. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

None of these allows for a parenthesis.

A stone becomes a mountain. A child is born to rule an ever-increasing kingdom. Unbroken growth. Leaven leavens all the dough. A seed becomes a tree. Business is uninterrupted. No gaps, no discontinuities, no parentheses.

d. The Sociology of Eschatology

Every eschatological, theological, philosophical system has a mindset. People's view of reality and life affects the way they live. For those with some kind of victorious eschatology, they will put all their efforts into moving in that direction. They believe, as a result of their actions, they will obtain the prize. As noted above, birthrates are an indicator of generational eschatology. In America, the current trend is that couples marry later and have fewer children. By the way, rising rates of children born out of wedlock are a pessimistic indicator of the future. In the next 20 years, demographics in America will change dramatically as the baby-boomer generation passes from the scene and every year fewer babies are born. A pessimistic leaven has been working its way through the culture for a hundred years.

Much of the deteriorating pop culture is fed from the universities which fundamentally teach materialism. The end of the materialist is decomposition in the ground. The best that they can hope for is to be remembered, but most won't be. The materialistic universe simply just doesn't care.

> In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, **nothing but pitiless indifference**.
> Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*

An ecclesiastical social theory is simply missing. Without a positive, victorious, future vision, there is no reason to develop an overarching theory (and practice) of biblical social structure. I heard one preacher say that the Bible has no sociology or culture. I would suspect he wasn't looking because he was, in fact, a futurist. Jesus would be coming to rapture His Church any time now. Why develop a Christian social theory and application (economics, science, education, architecture, etc.) to "to order it and establish it with judgment and justice forever" (Is 9:7, 2Cor 10:3-5)? We are just supposed to wait for Jesus to come and do it Himself, after the tribulation. This is a Christian entitlement, welfare mentality. Let the government take care of things.

There is no other country on earth that has the Christian resources like America. We have more books, audios, videos, TV stations, Bible translations, study materials, schools, Bible colleges, seminaries, church choices. And yet we are losing ground as well as the next generation. We do so little with what we have. Why is that?

In the meantime, the popular end-time view does not have space for any large-scale social structure bigger than "love one another," family, and church. Biblical governance is limited to small pockets of Christian philosophers and social theorists. That was not the case 250 years ago.

e. Jesus's Coming(s)

Over time, I have read in commentaries and heard critics say that the apostles were wrong in **their belief** that "Jesus was coming soon." Defenders will say Jesus never said He was coming soon and that the apostles simply misunderstood what He was saying. But critics point to plain verses that say otherwise. And this is a serious point: If Jesus plainly said He was coming within the lifetime of His immediate disciples and they believed it, and even wrote assuming it to be true and then Jesus didn't come in their lifetime, as He said, then Jesus was not just wrong but deceptive. If Jesus was wrong, then the Bible is wrong and not worth believing.

Here are three such references cited by Bertrand Russel in his little book "Why I Am Not a Christian."

> **Matthew 10:16-23**
> 16 "Behold, I send **you** out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver **you** up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. 18 **You** will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver **you** up, do not worry about how or what **you** should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what **you** should speak; 20 for it is not **you** who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in **you**. 21 "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And **you** will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. **For assuredly, I say to you,** you will not have gone through the **cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

Question: To what "end" is Jesus referring, in verse 22?

Matthew 16:28; see parallel verse Mk 9:1
28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

Matthew 24:34; See parallel verses Mk 13:30, Lk 21:32
34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Noted atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) wrote the following in his book *Why I Am Not a Christian*, a lecture he delivered on March 6, 1927, to the National Secular Society:

> I am concerned with Christ as he appears in the Gospel narrative as it stands, and there one does find some things that do not seem to be very wise. For one thing, He certainly thought that His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before the death of all the people who were living at that time. There are a great many texts that prove that and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that He believed that His coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching.
> (Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), page 16.

Russell also makes a common mistake with the language "second coming would occur in clouds of glory" not knowing that "clouds of glory" on the earth refer to coming judgment and the wrath of God (Is 19:1, Jer 4:14, Joel 2:2, Zeph 1:15, Mt 24:30, Rev 1:7).

Then there is what C. S. Lewis considers the most embarrassing verse in the Bible:

> But there is worse to come. "Say what you like," we shall be told, "the apocalyptic beliefs of the first Christians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created their delusion. He said in so many words, "this generation shall not pass till all these things be done," Matthew 24:34. And He was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else." It is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible.
> C. S. Lewis, *The World's Last Night and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960), 97-98

Probably the most prominent of the three verses above contains the phrase "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation...all these things…"

Matthew 24:33-35; See parallel verses Mk 13:30, Lk 21:32
33 So you also, when you see **all these things**, know that it is near—at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you**, this generation** will by no means pass away till **all these things** take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

If it doesn't mean what it plainly says, then it must be massaged, adjusted, or twisted to mean something else. Again, we are at the place where an external belief is the driving force of interpretation. I showed these verses to someone who promptly said, "See, this proves Jesus is coming soon." So after going through the context of the verse, they agreed that Jesus wasn't talking to us but His disciples (Mt 24:3-4). But it didn't change their mind.

There are four key words in Mt 24:34:

- You – Who was the audience to whom Jesus was speaking? See also Mt 24:33.
- This – Which generation is Jesus talking about? This, with generation, sets the time frame.
- Generation – What is the correct meaning of this word? Lineage, race, time.
- All – How many of the preceding events will happen in the allotted time?

Below are four related Greek words that have distinctly different meanings. Also shown is the Strong's numbers and the number of times that word is used in the New Testament.

- gen ees iss G1078 x 3 This is a place word
  land of nativity, birth

- gen nay ma G1081 x 9 This is a lineage word
  offspring, brood, begotten

- gen os G1085 x 21 This is a type word
  kind(red), nation, race, family

- gen ay ah G1074 x 39 This is a time word
  generation, age (fixed time)**, 100% used for "this generation"**

These are all different forms of the same root word. I looked at a dozen good translations and all used "this generation" in Mt 24:34. The most explicit was from the New Century Version below. I am sure there is at least one translation that uses "this race" or some other aberrant attempt to obscure the plain meaning of the text. What is the logical conclusion if the word "race" is used? Is it not that the race will come to an end?

Matthew 24:34
I tell you the truth, all these things will happen while the people of this time are still living.

"The word "this" is the demonstrative adjective and could better be translated "that generation." That is, the generation which sees all these signs (probably starting with World War I) shall not have completely passed away until all these things have taken place.
Henry M. Morris (1918-2006), Defender's Study Bible, p.1045, 1995

Henry Morris says the demonstrative should be changed from near, "this" to far, "that." Do you want this Bible or that Bible? Every language has the means to differentiate between a near demonstrative from a far demonstrative. Henry Morris's translation is driven by his presupposition that we are living in the end times. So, once again we see that an external belief, not Scripture itself, drives the interpretation. It is Scripture that must interpret Scripture, not an external belief or system. This is common. He also assumes no other generation had seen all the signs. Also, common. There is probably no one left alive that saw World War I. Someone born in 1910 would be over 110 years old. Another theory bites the dust!

No, Jesus was NOT wrong! Jesus said exactly what He meant, and the apostles understood clearly. The critics are arguing against a bad theological, eschatological system that drives faulty interpretations. The defenders of such a faulty system give ammunition to the enemies of God. Only God knows how many have abandoned biblical faith. Renowned New Testament scholar and former Moody Bible Institute student, turned agnostic, Bart Ehrman, is one such case. He now writes books against the accuracy of the New Testament and inspires disbelief amongst his readers. He cites the reasons above for the overthrow of his faith. It is still the truth that sets people free.

7. **Jesus Coming in Judgment**

In a related idea, a recent challenger made the statement that he agreed that the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed by the judgment of God, but that doesn't mean it was Jesus who executed the judgment. He was resisting the idea that the fall of Jerusalem was the "coming" in judgement that Jesus had been predicting. Some of these predictions are highlighted below.

But was the coming of Jesus in judgment "in the air" in the pre- AD 70 Judean world?

Before I answer the question, I want to talk briefly about some terminology, which is often a source of confusion. We generally use the phrase "second coming" to mean Jesus's next coming. But this is interpreted according to the eschatological system of the interpreter. It should be made clear that, according to Dispensationalism, the rapture is **not** the second coming! In the Dispensational system the second coming is when Jesus sets up the 1000-year kingdom, also called the Triumphal Return. Jesus defeats the Antichrist, his system and becomes ruler of the world. Kingdom rule is imposed on the world. The Triumphal Return, in fact is not directly stated, and only implied once in the New Testament.

Hebrews 9:28

… so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him,
He will **appear** a **second time**, apart from sin, **for salvation**.

Note the word "appear," ophthesetai, G3952 – to stare at, to observe. It is not the usual word for "coming," parousia – presence, coming.

Curiously, from the Strong's note related to G3952 "From the present participle of G3918; a being near, that is, advent (often, return; **specifically of Christ to punish Jerusalem**, or finally the wicked)." *Emphasis added.* Apparently, James Strong (1822-1894) was a preterist. The idea that Jesus came to punish Jerusalem and destroy the temple (Acts 6:13-14) is not new and has been in the air since Jesus prophesied it in Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

But more specifically, note the last phrase "for salvation." Sin was dealt its fatal blow at the cross (Dan 9:24 Rom 6:7, 18, 22, Heb 10:1-4, 9-14). The author of Hebrews is writing to "saved" people, believers in Jesus Christ, so this cannot be talking about the unsaved. What remains is the final step of salvation, the "redemption of our body" (Rom 8:23), the resurrection of the body, (Apostle's Creed). It is the event described in 1Th 4 and 1Cor 15 that we normally call the "Second Coming" in which the grand finale is final judgment, then the new heavens and new earth, and conclusion of the Eden Project. This is the historical understanding of Second Coming.

This is completely different from the coming "of Christ to punish Jerusalem." The wrath of God and the redemption of our body are not the same. Also still remaining is the liberation of creation from its bondage to decay (Rom 8:21) which is connected to the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23). Romans 8 is a profound chapter.

So technically the coming of Christ in judgment of Jerusalem was the second coming and the redemption of our body is the third coming. Futurists add two more comings and really confuse things, the rapture, and the triumphal return, when Jesus sets up a millennial Kingdom, then final judgment.

In the simplicity, there was a coming of Christ in judgment, in the past at AD 70, and the coming of Christ for the redemption of our body and final judgment, still in the future, to hopefully keep things clearer. Cleaning up bad teaching is not an easy task. But it is a wonderful thing that truth is not complicated.

Never underestimate the difficulty of changing false beliefs by facts.
(Henry Rosovsky, Economic Historian)

A little repetition, just in case.

Let's look at what Jesus said about His near future, our distant past. Can we tell the difference between something near and something not so near? Of course. It is built into every language. The near demonstrative "this" denotes something close (i.e., "this Bible"). Conversely the far demonstrative "that" denotes something farther away (i.e., "that Bible"). One is near, and the other is farther away. As we saw in the Henry Morris quote, an external belief drives not just the interpretation but actually drives translation of Scripture. Look again at Mt 23:36 and 24:34.

Can we trust the plain, straightforward reading of Scripture? For sure! All we have are the words of Jesus, His apostles, and history as our guide. If it takes a highly trained professional to tell us such a difference, then it is not true that the Bible is meant to be understandable by just about anybody.

So, again, looking at Mt 24:34, what does it say?

"Assuredly, I say to you, **this** generation will by no means pass away until **all** these things take place."

Can "this" possibly mean "some generation off in the distant future?" If Jesus meant a distant generation, how would He have said it? Over 15 times some form of "this generation" is used in the Gospels and always means exactly the same thing. The issue is not how a word **can** be used but **how** it is actually used, in context.

So, was the coming of Jesus in judgment "in the air" in the pre-70AD Judean world? Absolutely!

We have noted the so-called "problem scriptures" in which Jesus said He was coming within the lifetime of His disciples. But these are only problems to those that don't like what they plainly say.

John 2:18-21

18 So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" 19 Jesus answered and said to them, "**Destroy this temple**, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken **forty-six years to build this temple**, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the **temple of His body**.

Jesus was the cornerstone of the new temple of God. 1Pt 2:4-10, Ps 118:22, 127:1, Is 28:16, 66:1, Act 4:11, 7:49 and we are living stones, the rebuilt temple/body of Christ.

Matthew 26:60-61

60 … Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

- Stephen was accused of saying Jesus was coming to destroy the temple (Acts 6):
  Acts 6:13-14
  13 They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; 14 for we have heard him say that **this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us**."

- The Lord's brother James was killed for saying Jesus was about to come:
  12. The aforesaid Scribes and Pharisees therefore placed James upon the pinnacle of the temple and cried out to him and said: "Thou just one, in whom we ought all to have confidence, forasmuch as the people are led astray after Jesus, the crucified one, declare to us, what is the gate of Jesus." 13. And he answered with a loud voice, "Why do ye ask me concerning Jesus, the Son of Man? **He himself sitteth in heaven** at the right hand of the great Power, and **is about to come upon the clouds of heaven**." 504
  504 Cf. Matt. xxvi. 64 and Mark xiv. 62

Hegesipps (110-180), Fragments from His Five Books of Commentaries on the Acts of the Church.
https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.vii.xxiv.html#fna_iii.vii.xxiv-p20.2
https://revelationrevolution.org/jesus-the-son-of-man-was-seen-in-the-clouds-in-a-d-66/

This was a very public execution. James was put on the pinnacle of the temple to address the crowd. They all heard James speak and watched him die. Same with Stephen.

According to Josephus, when the Romans were launching the 100 talent white stones (Rev 16:21) from their catapults, the watchers on the wall shouted, "The Son is coming," mocking James's prediction (Josephus, *The Jewish War*, v.vi.3).

- Daniel's prophecy of the coming of the messiah and destruction of Jerusalem, Dan 9:24-27
- At the end of this chapter, Appendix A, are over 70 examples is the idea that Jesus was soon, coming in the first century.
- The Book of Revelation opens and closes with statements that Jesus is coming soon, relative to the writing of the book (Rev 1:1, 1:3, 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20).

Agreed that "soon" or "at the door" or "at hand" can be somewhat nebulous time frames, but 2000 years is absurd. Forty years is not a problem and there is a precedent (Num 14:34). But there are still the 15 plus statements that what was coming would all happen within "this generation" and many more synonyms, soon, near, at hand, etc. Which generation? The generation of Jesus's audience. Simple, unless driven eisegetically, from an external belief system.

8. Some Key Prophetic Passages

a. Daniel 2, 7, 9

The Plan for The Ages – Daniel 2

Daniel 2:31-34, 36-45

31 "You, O king (Nebuchadnezzar), were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. 35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

36 "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—**you are this head of gold**. 39 But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall **rule over all the earth**. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, **partly of potter's clay and partly of iron**, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the

kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay."

Note the legs of iron are Imperial Rome, but the feet are partly iron and partly clay. The feet represent a unique time in history. Obviously, the **iron is Rome** (Dan 2 and 7), but what of the clay? **The clay represents Israel**. Isa 29:16, 41:25, 45:9, 64:8, Jer 18:5-6, Lam 4:2.
There was only one time in history when Rome and Israel were mixed, but distinct**,** and that was **the time of the Messiah.**

44 "And **in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed**; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 Inasmuch as you saw that **the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands,** and that it **broke in pieces** the iron (Rome), the bronze (Greece), the clay (Israel), the silver (Medo-Persia), and the gold (Babylon)—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The **dream is certain**, and its **interpretation is sure**."

Note that the Stone hits the feet of the image and destroys the whole image. So how can some vestige of the image (a revived Roman empire) continue into the distant future? The span of time from Nebuchadnezzar's dream to the Kingdom of God was (c. 595BC-70AD): Babylon (606-539BC), Medo-Persia (539-331BC), Greece (331-168BC), Rome (168BC-?476AD) and Israel (?-70AD).

When Caesar Augustus (27BC-14AD) ruled, he divided the empire into 10 regions for better management and assigned a king over each one. Herod was the king of Palestine when Jesus was born. There was also the "Decapolis" or Ten Cities (Mt 4:25, Mk 5:20, 7:31). In **the days of those kings**, the great, eternal, unbreakable, unshakable, unstoppable Kingdom of God was established on the earth.

Are there further Scriptures related to "**in the days of these kings?"** Take a look at the context of Rev 12, it is at the time of the birth of Christ and His ascension, not some distant future time. The often repeated time period of 3 ½ years appears three time (Rev 12:6, 14, 13:5) here. It was the time it took for Jerusalem to fall and the temple destroyed, until of the "times of the Gentiles" are concluded (Lk 21:20-24). The Kingdom was inaugurated in a time of great resistance and turmoil.

Revelation 12:1-6
1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then **being with child**, she cried out in **labor and in pain to give bir**th. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having **seven heads and ten horns** (13:1)**, and seven crowns on his heads**. 4 His tail drew **a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth**. And the dragon stood before **the woman who was ready to give birth**, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore **a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron** (Isa 9:6-7, Dan 7:13-14, Psa 2:8-12, Rev 2:27, 19:15). And her **Child was caught up to God and His throne**. 6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there 1,260 days.

Revelation 12:7-12
7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 **So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world**; he was **cast to the earth** (Rev 20:3), and his angels were **cast out** with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "**Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come**, (See also Rev 11:) for the **accuser** of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been **cast down**. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! **Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea**! For the devil has come down to you, **having great wrath**, because he knows that **he has a short time**."

Revelation 13:1
1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having **seven heads (**Rev 17:10) **and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns** (12:3), and on his heads a blasphemous name.

Enthronement – Daniel 7

Acts 1:9
Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Daniel 7:9-14, 26-27
9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the **Ancient of Days** was seated;
His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.
11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. (Mt 28:18)
13 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the **Son of Man**, **coming with the clouds of heaven**! He came to the **Ancient of Days**, and they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was **given dominion and glory and a kingdom**, that **all peoples, nations, and languages** should serve Him. His dominion is an **everlasting dominion**, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.
26 But the court shall be seated, and **they shall take away his dominion**, to consume and destroy it forever. 27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people**, **the saints of the Most High**. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

See also Ps 2, 24:1, 1Tm 1:7, 6:5, Rev 1:5, Lk 19:12

Question: What is the direction of travel in verse 13?

Verses 11 and 12 are at the time of the Roman Empire, the fourth empire from Daniel 2. This is the time when the God of Heaven set up His Kingdom. In verse 27, dominion is taken from Rome and is given to the people of the Most High. Within 300 years of Jesus's ascension, Christianity was the dominant influence in the Roman empire and paganism was fading fast.

Matthew 26:64-66, also Mark 14:62
64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter **you will see** the **Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power** and **coming on the clouds of heaven**."
65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!

Who will see? Those attending the mock trial (Rev 1:7), coming on the clouds, "The Cloud Rider" was one of the designations for Yahveh, coming in judgement (Ps 104:3, Jer 4:3, Dan 7:13).

Luke 22:69-70
69 Hereafter the **Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God**." 70 Then they all said, "**Are You then the Son of God**?" So, He said to them, "**You rightly say that I am**."

Where else in Scripture is found "the right-hand of power" and "coming on clouds" together? The religious leaders knew exactly what Jesus was saying in the above verses. Jesus was saying that He was the prophetic fulfillment of Daniel 7, the second of the two powers of heaven: the Son of man, and they hated Him all the more for it, and charged Him with the capitol crime of blasphemy!

Daniel's 70 Weeks – Daniel 9

The book of Hebrews is the theological outworking of Daniel 9:24-27.

Daniel 9:1-2, 24-27
1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

All the "return to the land" prophecies are about to be fulfilled when Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years of captivity is completed (Jer 25:11-12, 29:10-14, 2Chr 36:21, Ezra 1:2, Neh 2:1-7). There are no "return to the land" prophecies after Cyrus and Artaxerxes or in the New Testament, not one.

24 **Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city**, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.
25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth **of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times (2Chr 36:21, Ezra 1:2, Nehemiah 4:18, a sword by their side).
26 And after the sixty-two weeks **Messiah shall be cut off**, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it **shall be with a flood**, and till the end of the war **desolations are determined**.
(See also Mt 23:31-38, 24:2, Mk 13:19, Lk 13:35, 21:22)
27 Then he shall **confirm a covenant with many for one week** (Jer 31:31-34, Heb 8:8); But in **the middle of the week**, He shall **bring an end to sacrifice and offering**. And **on the wing of abominations** shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

This passage is the root of the Dispensationalist's 7-year tribulation period and the Antichrist's covenant with the Jews which is later broken. It is found nowhere else in Scripture but here. A further necessary feature is a rebuilt temple in a revived Jewish state is not found anywhere in the New Testament. But are such concepts justified? Where in Scripture does it say that plainly? Where does the Bible say there will be a one-world ruler, other than Jesus? If it doesn't mean what the prophecy experts say, then the modern end-time picture simply falls to the ground in a heap of ruins.

Because this passage is so pivotal, I will spend some extra time here. We have the usual advantage of 20-20 hindsight when it comes to fulfillment of prophecy in history.

The first thing to note, as always, is the context. As the chapter opens, we see that Daniel had been reading Jeremiah and observing the promise of God, the judgmental dispersion that would last 70 years. The time frame in history (verse 1) suggests that Daniel had recognized the 70 years were almost complete and begins to pray.

Question: Was the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah continuous or interrupted?

After a period of time, the angel Gabriel (verse 21) interrupts Daniel's prayer-time to show him things to come and layout the time until the Messiah arrives. See also Daniel 2:44, 7:14, 9:24-27 which are the prophetic part of Gabriel's message. Notice the first word of verse 24: **Seventy**. Immediately we are connected to verse 2 and Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years. Another connection to Jeremiah will arise shortly. The end of the 70 years is the beginning of 7 x 70 or 490 years. The day one season closes marks the day a new season opens.

Verse 24 says, "**Seventy weeks** are determined for **your people** and for **your holy city**…" Who are Daniel's people? The Jews or Israelites. What is Daniel's city? It is right there in verse 2, Jerusalem. So, what follows is all about the Jews and Jerusalem. What is the time frame? **Seventy weeks or 490 years**. The scope of the prophecy is laid out for Daniel, and for us. We have historical hindsight to see how these prophecies were fulfilled.

There are six things determined:

1. To finish the transgression, Isa 43:25, 53:5, Heb 9:15, Jn 19:30 "It is finished."
2. To make an end of sins, Mt 1:21, Heb 8:12, Jn 1:29, Heb 9:26
3. To make reconciliation for iniquity, Rom 5:10, Eph 2:16, 2Cor 5:19, Col 1:19-20
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness, Rom 10:3, 8:10, 2Cor 5:21, Php 3:9, 1Cor 1:30, Heb 7:1-2
5. To seal up vision and prophecy, Isa 29:10-11, Mt 5:17-20, 11:13, Jn 5:39, 6:27, 19:28-30, Act 3:18, 22 26:17-19, Hab 2:3, Heb 10:37
6. To anoint the Most Holy (one or place is not specified), Lk 1:35, Act 3:14, 1Jn 2:20, 27, Mt 27:51, Psa 45:7, Isa 61:1, Lk 4:16-21, Act 2:27, 4:27, 10:38, Jn 14:6, Rom 1:4, Heb 10:14, 19-20.
   The best assumption is the anointing of Messiah at the Jordan River,

Who finished the transgression?	Mt 23:31-36, 21:33-22:14
Who made an end of sins?	Heb 9:25-26, 10, Is 53, Rom 6, 11:27, 2Cor 5:21
Who made reconciliation?	2Cor 5:18-20, Is 53
Who brought in everlasting righteousness?	2Cor 5:21, Rom 3:21, 25-26, 5:17, 10
Who sealed up the vision and prophecy?	Mk 1:15, Lk 21:22, Jn 19:30
Who/what is the Most Holy?	Is 61:1-2, Lk 4:18, Mt 16:16, 20, Act 10:38, Heb 9:10-11

Also, the term for the cube shaped Holy of Holies was most the "Most Holy" place, where the presence of God dwelt. That place is now the Body of Christ and is depicted in Rev 21 as a cubic city. The house that God built, Jn 14:1-3, 1Pt 2:4-5. The idea that God would anoint a rebuilt stone temple is absurd, especially since the resurrected (Jn 2:21) Living Stone Temple had arrived.

The short answer to all is the same: His name is Jesus, and He concluded it all ("it is finished") at the cross. But I am getting ahead of myself.

25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to **restore and build Jerusalem until** Messiah the Prince, There shall be **seven weeks** and **sixty-two weeks**;
The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.
2Chr 36:21, Ezra 1:2, Is 45:1-4.

Gabriel says not just "know" but also "understand." This knowledge is intended to be understood. It is not rocket science requiring highly trained professionals to interpret what the angel said. "Weeks" is literally "sevens" and is understood to be "seven years." Ezekiel 4:6 says prophetically a day is a year. A certain command, to restore and build Jerusalem (not temple), will come and 483 years later the Messiah will show up. First, there are 7 years x 7 = 49 years, the time it took to rebuild Jerusalem, see Ezra and Nehemiah, and note the "troublesome times." Then, 7 years x 62 = 434 years. So, 49 years + 434 years = 483 years from the command until Messiah. Also counting weeks (sevens), we have 7 + 62 = 69 weeks.

The people of that day could also count the prophecy. They knew it was the time of the Messiah. Maybe they didn't know the date, but they knew the season. The announcement by John the Baptist as he saw Jesus approach the Jordan River to be baptized ends the 69th week. Jesus rises up from the waters, the Heavens are rent, and the Holy Spirit descends, beginning the 70th week. Jesus is announced as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "The One who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3:11). There is no other moment like this! It launches Jesus into His 3½ year ministry in which 350 prophecies were fulfilled. It is time for the proclamation of the Gospel: The King and Lord of the hosts of Heaven has come!

http://www.criticalmass.pro/tfc2/resources/351PropheciesFulfilledbyJesus.pdf

Genesis 49:10-11

10 **The scepter shall not depart from Judah**, nor **a lawgiver from between his feet**, **until Shiloh comes**; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. 11 Binding **his donkey** to the vine, And **his donkey's colt** to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

This prophecy has two parts relating to the timing of the arrival of Messiah. The first is that there would be a Judaic, later Davidic ruler until Shiloh (Messiah) comes. Following the destruction of the temple in 70AD, there were no more Judaic/Davidic kings except for Shiloh, the Eternal King, the King of kings, King Jesus. The second is called The Triumphal Entry of Jesus on a donkey, and colt.

Matthew 21:1-5

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." 4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, (Zech 9:9) saying:

5 Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'

Luke 2:8-11

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, **I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.** 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Mark 1:14-15

14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching **the gospel of the kingdom of God**, 15 and saying, "**The time is fulfilled**, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Question: What time is fulfilled? How close is "at hand?"

Prophecy students should recognize the 3½ year time span found several places in Daniel and Revelation. References to 3½: Dan 9:27, 12:7, Lk 9, 11, 12:6, 14, and Rev 11:2-3 with Lk 21:24, and Jesus's ministry. Various prophecy experts are mixed in trying to combine two of the various 3½ year periods to produce the seven-year tribulation period. But a seven-year span is only found in one verse in the entire Bible, Dan 9:27.

There is not a lot of disagreement so far. But…

26 And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the **people of the prince** who is to come **shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

This is where serious controversy begins.

Jesus's earthly ministry, following the 62 weeks, which follows the 7 weeks (69 weeks total), begins the 70th week and lasts 3½ years, until "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself … in the middle of the week." The sinless Lamb takes on the sin of the world, becoming the final sacrifice. He was cut off from the land of the living for our sin. Is 53:8. The second 3½ years of the 70th week is the early part of the Book of Acts and concludes with the conversion of Cornelius, the Gospel is opened to the nations. The uninterrupted 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy mirrors the uninterrupted 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy. I showed some indicators of the continuous nature of the 70 weeks above in The Parentheses. All 6 determinations from verse 24 above are accomplished. Simple and to the point. The 7 years of Jesus and His church is one of supreme, triumphal victory! Jesus has ascended and taken His seat on David's throne (Acts 1:9, Dan 7:13), the Heavens have opened (Is 64:1, Mk 1:10), the Holy Spirit poured out fulfilling Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2:16-17), thousands of Jews are being born again, 3000 that day, the great end-times harvest is being reaped, the remnant is gathered, the enemies are breathing out threats, and the Gospel is received by the nations (Acts 10), in fulfillment of many prophecies. Wow, what a week!!

Some try to put the end of the 69th week at the triumphal entry into Jerusalen, but that doesn't fit all the necessary details like the Jesus's baptism at the Jordan River.

But wait a minute…

According to the Dispensationalists, the 70th week (the 7-year tribulation period) is still sometime in the future. The gap between the 69th week and 70th week is called a parenthesis, and God's prophecy clock has stopped. We are now living in the parentheses period. Nobody knows exactly when the parentheses began but will end at the rapture of the Church from off the earth. The 70th week is the tribulation week and will start amidst the confusion of a large population vanishing from the earth, in the rapture. Those "left behind" will suffer terribly.

A big problem here is that the cross is put inside the parentheses because He is cut off AFTER the 69 weeks. All of Jesus's ministry, including the cross, is inside the parentheses. So also is the Book of Acts. There is not supposed to be **any** prophetic fulfillment inside the parentheses. So, how is Jesus fulfilling any of the 350 prophecies during His ministry if it is still all in a future 70th week? The redemptive work of Christ is still in that future. Furthermore, how can there be **any** "signs of the times" in our present, which is still inside the parentheses, if the prophetic clock has stopped? Inconsistencies abound.

Here is a link that shows 353 prophecies fulfilled by Jesus.

https://www.accordingtothescriptures.org/prophecy/353prophecies.html

The second part of the verse muddies the water even more: "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined" (See also Mt 23:31-38, 24:2, Mk 13:19, Lk 13:35, 21:22).

Now we have to flash forward 40 years after the Cross to the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem in AD 70. This is clearly after the 70 weeks. What is the connection? It is Messiah the Prince Himself. He will execute the Day of the Lord, the wrath of God (Mt 3:7, Lk 3:7), the Day of Vengeance (Is 61:2, Lk 21:22-23) until "not one stone is standing on another" (Mt 24:2). The people of the prince that comes to destroy are Romans under the Roman general Titus and acting as agents under the guiding hand of King Jesus. This was the same pattern as King Nebuchadnezzar acting as the agent of judgement some 70 years before Daniel. Remember Daniel was reading Jeremiah concerning the end of the dispersion. The reference to "flood" in verse 26 and "wing" in verse 27 are also indicators of the strength and speed of the events at the time when the city and the sanctuary are destroyed. At the end of the chapter is an overview of Matthew 24 and the horrors of Jerusalem's fall in Appendix B, *The Destruction of Jerusalem* by George Peter Holford, (1805).

The Jews were given 40 years for the harvest (Mt 9:37-38, 13:30, 39, Mk 4:29, Lk 10:22) and the sifting to take place, for the remnant to be gathered into the one new man (Eph 2:15), after which the chaff would be burned with terrible fire (Mt 3:12, Lk 3:17, 21:22, Acts 2:19-21). The fall of Jerusalem began in the spring of 67AD and ended with the destruction of the temple in August of 70 AD, 3 ½ years. Also, Rev 9: 5, 10 coincidentally speak of a five-month period of suffering. When Titus took over the siege of Jerusalem from his father, General Vespasian, it took five months to complete the task amidst terrible suffering for those inside the city.

John 4:29-42
29 "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him. 31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." 32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." 33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" 34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 **Do you not say**, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, **lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest**! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: One sows and another reaps." 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and **you have entered into their labors**."
39 And many of the Samaritans of that city **believed in Him** because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And **many more believed** because of His own word. 42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, **for we ourselves have heard Him** and **we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world**."

Jesus pointed out the flow of people coming from the city to see Him. Their light-colored clothing made it easy for Jesus apply this parable. The harvest is now, AD 30-70!

Contrary to popular belief there is no "great end times harvest," because the end times is in the past, the harvest is in the past. The prophesied harvest was the gathering of remnant Jews between AD 30 and AD 70 into the "one new man" (Eph 2:15). The harvest was about the Jews in fulfilment of many

prophecies. 144,000 Jews (Rev 7:1, 14:1) entered the Kingdom at that time. But that is not to say there won't be some large evangelistic efforts in the future. Right now, there are untold numbers entering the Kingdom around the world. Estimates are about 200,000 per day and among them are Jewish people! The religious oppression of closed countries is driving people to Jesus! He is gathering up the nations. Only when those countries reopen will we know the magnitude of the impact of the Gospel. The Kingdom leaven and the mustard tree are doing their work (Mt 13:31-33) and they cannot be stopped.

Matthew 13:36-43 from 13:24-30
36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "**He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man**. 38 The **field is the world**, the **good seeds are the sons of the kingdom**, but the **tares are the sons of the wicked one**. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the **harvest is the end of the age**, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire [Acts 2:19-29], so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17
His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Luke 21:22
For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Acts 2:19-21
19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Is 13:10).

This is the language of judgment being prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:30-31). Pentecost then Holocaust. See also Ezekiel 9 where the righteous are sealed before the wicked are sealed (Rev 7:3, 13:16-14:5).

Acts 6:14
for we have heard [Stephen] say that **this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place** and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

The destruction of the temple and the burning of Jerusalem is the sign that the Son of Man is seated on His throne in Heaven. The sign in Heaven is the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power (Mt 24:30, Dan 7:9-13, Mt 26:64, Mk 13:26, Lk 21:27, Acts 7:55-56).

Probably many have never heard this put this way before. Jesus prophesied much concerning the near future and the coming judgment on Jerusalem. Many books and papers have been written on this subject, so I will list some of them in the bibliography.

Back to Daniel.

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week, He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

Once the abominable betrayal and crucifixion of the Son, in the middle of the week, is accomplished, the desolation is certain.

According to dispensationalists the "he" is the antichrist that will "make" a covenant with the Jews then in the middle of the week will "break" the covenant. The problem is that the words "make" and "break" are simply not in the verse. They must be imposed onto the text. Again, we see eisegesis, foreign ideas, driven by an external system. While "make" and "break" are simply not in the verse, the word "confirm" is. A covenant is confirmed, or reiterated, restated.

The "he" is referring to the Messiah who confirms a prophesied "new covenant' in Jeremiah 31.

Jeremiah 31:31-34
31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when 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 lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant **which they broke**, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," **for they all shall know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For **I will forgive their iniquity**, and **their sin I will remember no more**." (Repeated in Hebrews 8:8-12)

The Messiah is confirming a previously promised covenant in the words of this prophecy, and in the middle of the week, He is "cut off, but not for Himself." The Messiah becomes the final sacrifice, inaugurating the "new covenant in My blood" (Mt 26:28). Apostate men will continue to offer idolatrous sacrifices for 40 more years, then after the temple's destruction, never again. In the end the temple was full of corpses, and a river of blood flowed out, as described by Josephus. The abominations have made the polluted city desolate (Mt 23:38), only fit to be burned. The fire melted gold which flowed into the cracks between the stones. The stones were pried apart to recover the gold. Not one stone was left standing on another (Mt 24:2), fulfilling Jesus's prophecy. This is remarkably one of the most notable fulfillments of prophecy in the Bible. Every student of temple history is aware of it. Many don't like it because it validates Jesus as the prophet and judge.

The most significant event of the 2nd half of the first century was the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple (Mt 24:2). None of this is mentioned in the New Testament, except prophetically. This is also a hint that the New Testament was completed before AD 70.

The stone temple age had come to its end, and the living temple (Eph 2:22, 1Pt 2:4-9) age had begun. There was a forty-year overlap of the two ages. Recall the overlap of about 13 years for king Saul and king David. The adulterous wife was sentenced and executed according to the law (Deut 28:15-68), and a new wife had been secured according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rev 21, 1Pt 2:4-5, Eph 3:15, 5:32).

Daniel is told to "**shut up the words and seal the book** until **the time of the end**" (Dan 12:4) and stands in stark contrast to John who was told "**Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book**, for **the time is at hand**" (Rev 22:10). They were referring to the same time in history and that time had come. But it is in our past.

b. Matthew 24:14

And **this gospel of the kingdom** will be preached in **all the world** as a witness **to all the nations**, and then **the end will come**.

This verse needs some special attention. Others will be covered below.

1. What **gospel** is this talking about?

Many leave off "of the kingdom" when this verse is preached, they simply say the Gospel must be preached to the whole world. If the first condition is not even being met, then their efforts are found lacking. I would not say that their efforts are in vain because, in fact, people are hearing the Gospel of Salvation and being saved. Thank God for every person that will not encounter the Lake of Fire. But the Gospel of the Kingdom is not being preached. See Ch 8, "Dominion."

2. What is meant by "**all the world**" since most think to the whole planet?

The Greek word is **oikoumenē** and means "inhabited earth" and is generally used to refer to the world of the Roman Empire, as in the following verses: Lk 21:26, Act 24:5, Rev 3:10

Luke 2:1

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that **all the world** should be registered.

Acts 11:28

Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout **all the world**, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Acts 17:6

But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned **the world** upside down have come here too.

Acts 24:5

For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout **the world**, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Generally, when the NT refers to the whole planet it uses the word **kosmos** (Jn 3:16-17). Another word used is **gē** (Gaia, earth mother goddess comes from this) and usually means earth or the land and only sometimes means the planet. The apostle John uses this a lot, especially as "earth" in Revelation.

There are no hard and fast rules as authors sometimes use them interchangeably. Context and the theological bias of the translators make the final determination. There are a variety of English words that have a similar problem, such as: power/authority, heaven/sky.

3. What is meant by "all the nations?"

Quite simply, it is the tribes and Nations of the Roman Empire.
Acts 24:5, Rom 1:8, Col 1:6, 23

4. What "end" will come?

The end, in the context of Matt 24:2, 34, is the end of the Mosaic, stone temple age.
Act 2:16-21, Heb 1:2, 8:6, 13

c. The Soon Coming Wrath

Take particular note of the references to fire.

Matthew 3:7-10

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "**Brood of vipers**! Who warned you to **flee from the wrath to come**? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And **even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees**. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is **cut down and thrown into the fire**." Luk 3:9

This was ultimately fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Mat 24:2, Luk 13:6-9, Heb 8:13, Act 2:19-21). More later. But God has another tree (John 12:23-24, 15:1-6, Rom 11, Rev 22:2), a true, lifegiving tree.

Matthew 13:36-43 from Matthew 13:24-30

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us **the parable of the tares of the field**." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are **the sons of the kingdom**, but the tares are **the sons of the wicked one**. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, **the harvest is the end of the age**, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as **the tares are gathered and burned in the fire**, so it will be **at the end of this age**. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and **they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire**. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the **righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father**. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear**!

Matthew 21:33-45

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir. **Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance**.' 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" 41 **They said to Him**, "**He will destroy those wicked men miserably**, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."
42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. this was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? 43 Therefore I say to you, "**the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it**. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." 45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, **they perceived that He was speaking of them**.

Matthew 22:1-7

1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."' 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest **seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them**. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And **he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city**.

Notice the proximity of the burning of the city to the wedding of the son. They are connected.

Matthew 23:34-38 also Luke 13:34-35
34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that **on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth**, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, **all these things will come upon this generation**. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! **Your house is left to you desolate**

Matthew 24:1-2
1 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 24:32-33
32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, **when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors**!

Matthew 24:34
Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by **no means pass away** till **all these things** take place.

Luke 23:27-31
27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. 28 But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but **weep for yourselves and for your children**. 29 For indeed **the days are coming** in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin **to say to the mountains**, "Fall on us!" and **to the hills**, "Cover us!" (Rev 6:16) 31 For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

d. Fulfilled, Double Fulfillment vs Types and Shadows

Some have argued, "So what if preterism can show prophecy was fulfilled in the past? There is still the "law of double fulfillment" or "law of double reference." These are still the end times and prophetic history is repeating itself." Where, in the Bible, does it say that? The problem is that the Bible allows for

no such law. It is a necessary construct to prop up the "Jesus is coming soon" message. It was first described by Dwight Pentecost in his book *Things to Come* in which he says of the Law of Double Reference: "Few laws are more important in the interpretation of prophetic Scriptures…" But he never says where it comes from or when and where to apply the law or how it consistently works. In short, the Law is simply asserted with no support in Scripture or anywhere else. It has been repeated so frequently it has become true by sheer repetition. No wonder there is so much confusion and so many books.

Dr. Michael Heiser says it like this, "A prophecy is a verbal utterance of something that is going to happen in the future. A type is a non-verbal thing or institution or event or person that foreshadows something in the future. A type is a non-verbal prophecy."

The truth is the Bible teaches types and shadows not double fulfillment. "…that it might be fulfilled…" is a key phrase in Matthew's gospel. Fulfilled is fulfilled – done, finished, over! Two others are:

Mark 1:14-15
14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "**The time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel."

This being Jesus's earliest preaching also points to the fulfilment of the 69 weeks or 483 years. This supports the idea that a week is seven years, and Jesus has opened the 70th week.

Luke 21:21-23
21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, **that all things which are written may be fulfilled**. 23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

A deeper question is, "By what authority does one apply the Law of Double Fulfillment to any prophecy? How is such a Law justified for any prophecy?" The truth is that it is applied when necessary to make the futurist system work.

Hebrews 8 and 10, below, introduce us to the types and shadows. Much has been written on the topic and application of the Mosaic shadows and realities in New Testament fulfilment. I once had a 36-hour sermon series on the Tabernacle of Moses in which every detail was examined from the Types and Shadows perspective and application made to our life in Christ. Scripture interprets Scripture.

Romans 5:14
Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of **Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come**.

Hebrews 8:1-5
1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve **the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things **according to the pattern** shown you on the mountain."

Hebrews 10:1-4
1 For **the law**, having **a shadow of the good things to come**, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had **no more consciousness of sins**.3 But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. ``4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

This passage gives a good comparison between the Old and New Covenants. In the Old Covenant there is a yearly reminder of sins, while in the New there should be no more consciousness of sin.

Question: Does your church constantly remind you of your sinfulness? If so, it is probably an Old Testament church, not a New Testament church.

Colossians 2:16-17
16 So **let no one judge you** in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are **a shadow of things to come**, but **the substance is of Christ**.

Galatians 3:19, 23-25
19 What purpose then does **the law** serve? **It was added** because of transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom **the promise** was made
23 But **before faith came**, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore **the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ**, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But **after faith has come**, we are **no longer under a tutor**.

Galatians 4:21-26
21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 **which things are an allegory**. For these **are the two covenants**: **the one from Mount Sinai** which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— 25 for this Hagar is **Mount Sinai in Arabia**, and corresponds to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage with her children— 26 but **the Jerusalem above is free**, which is the mother of us all.

Question: Where is Mount Sinai, according to verse 25?

There is no mention of prophetic shadows, only fulfilment – "… that it might be fulfilled…" The purpose of biblical shadows and patterns is to be representative of an over-arching truth. But this over-arching truth is revealed to us who have 20-20 biblical hindsight. As a reminder, every truth is like a road with a ditch on each side. One ditch is neglect, and the other is obsession.

A common example of double fulfillment comes from Acts 2.

Acts 2:16-17
16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh' (Joel 2:28).

Some say, "Yes, this did happen in the first century, but because it contains the words "last days" God is about to do it again for the great end-time harvest." There are also prominent preachers today that say this passage has yet to be fulfilled. Verse 16 is conveniently left out of their teachings. By selectively including or excluding verses, or phrases, they become guilty of "adulterating the word of God" (2Cor 4:2). But it is hard to blame them; they have been taught this way of thinking their entire lives. Same for

their followers. I was one until I actually began to study for myself. It took 10 years of grappling with these ideas to come to the refined contents of this chapter. The Scripture, free of speculation and tradition, is our gold standard and the constant pursuit of the truth of things.

After twenty years of pastor's conferences, it is a mystery to me how busy preachers ever learn anything new, especially revolutionary things. They are just too busy. It can take years to search-out, appreciate, absorb, and assemble a big idea. Pray for your ministers that the Holy Spirit can cut through the well-established paths in their lives and lead them to all truth (Jn 16:13).

What About Replacement Theology?

Replacement Theology (RT) is the idea that the Church has "replaced" Israel. It is primarily used as a slur by those that believe is some form of the idea that God has "two chosen peoples" against those who don't. The "two chosen peoples" are a natural people, Jews and a spiritual people, the Church. If you have ever heard someone say, "The Jews are still God's chosen people," this is what they are referring too.

Note that the very word "replacement" assumes a plurality: that one thing has "replaced" another. Those that employ such an accusation admit to the world their presupposition of the "two chosen peoples" hypothesis, and it effects their entire view of Scripture.

But are they correct in their thinking? Is it Replacement Theology or Fulfilment Theology? Does God, in fact, have two chosen peoples? What does the Scripture say? I would suggest you read ALL of Eph 2-3 Rom 11, Gal 3 carefully. Here is a brief introduction:

Ephesians 2:11-19

11 Therefore remember that you, **once Gentiles in the flesh**—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that **at that time** you were without Christ, being **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel** and **strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 **But now in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were **afar off** and to those who were **near**. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Ephesians 3:4-6

4 by which, when you read, **you may understand my knowledge in the mystery** of Christ, 5 which in other ages was **not made known** to the sons of men, as it has **now been revealed** by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 **that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body**, and **partakers of His promise in Christ** through the gospel

Romans 11:11-12, 17, 19-24

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!
17 And if some of the **branches were broken off**, and you, being **a wild olive tree**, were **grafted in among them, and with them** became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but **the root supports you**. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you

stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the **natural branches**, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, **if they do not continue in unbelief**, will be grafted in, for **God is able to graft them in again**. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is **wild by nature**, and were **grafted contrary to nature** into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are **natural branches**, be grafted into their **own olive tree**?

Galatians 3:7, 14, 16, 26-29
7 Therefore know that **only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham**.
14 **that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive **the promise of the Spirit** through faith.
16 Now **to Abraham and his Seed** were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to **your Seed**," **who is Christ**. Gen 12:7, 13:15, 24:7
26 For you are all **sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**. 29 And **if you are Christ's**, then **you are Abraham's seed**, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 6:15-16
15 For in Christ Jesus **neither circumcision nor uncircumcision** avails anything, **but a new creation**. 16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon **the Israel of God**.

Hebrews 8:7, 13
7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.
13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Jer 31:31-34, Heb 8:8-12
The Israel of God is the Body of Christ, The Olive Tree, in fulfilment of many Scriptures. This is Fulfilment Theology not Replacement Theology. The New Covenant has superseded the old. Replacement Theology denies the essential oneness of ALL the families of the earth, as promised to Abraham, and that Jesus Christ is the recipient of ALL the Abrahamic promises.

9. The Book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Luke 17:26-30
26 And **as it was** in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 **Likewise as it was** also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 **Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed**.

Jesus is not criticizing these normal activities or even implying they were distractions. He is pointing to the fact that the people were conducting ordinary activities and oblivious that

judgment was about to fall. There was a day when it was too late. So too is the fate of the city of Jerusalem when the Son of Man is revealed.

Please read this next statement carefully: The revelation of Jesus Christ is the burning of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. "Some of you apostles will live to see it happen" (Jesus).

These events display the truth for the entire world to see that Jesus Christ had taken His place on the throne and was now Ruler of the kings of the earth and executer of promised judgement (Rev 1:1-7, Mt 23:36, 24:2, 34, 28:18-20, Acts 2:19-20, 6:14, Col 2:9-10, Dan 9:26). How would a pre-destruction Christian understand the prophecy and judgment about to fall? How would they understand the Book of Revelation? I think very different from today's prophecy experts.

Restated: The destruction of the temple is the Revelation that Jesus Christ is on His throne.

Jesus's prophecy of "not one stone left on another that is not thrown down" (Mt 24:2, Mk 13:2, Lk 21:6), is probably one of the best attested examples of fulfilled prophecy that there is. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were all written before the temple was destroyed. Such destruction was considered unthinkable, even blasphemous to suggest, but this was the charge against Stephen (Acts 6:14).

a. Dating of the Book of Revelation

The dating of the Book of Revelation is important because if early (AD 65) then it is prophetic about the near-term future of Israel. If later (AD 95) then it is about the long-term future of the earth. Yes, there are various flavors in between, but examining variants is not the scope of this book but there are several other books listed in the Bibliography. *Before Jerusalem Fell* by Ken Gentry comes to mind. As always, we will start with the internal evidence of Scripture, then bring in history and tradition as supplementals.

The main clues come from John's introductory verses of his prophecy, Rev 1:1-3 (timing), 1:4 (scope) and 1:7 (theme). As with anything prophetic timing matters. In the case of Revelation, even more so. Everything you need to know about the timing and context of The Revelation can be found in the first seven verses.

Revelation 1:1-7

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must **shortly take place**. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 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**.

4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from **Him who is and who was and who is to come**, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the **ruler over the kings of the earth**. To Him who loved us and washed [freed] us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even **they who pierced Him**. And all the tribes of the land will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

A quick note of comparison: Revelation 1:4-5 and 17:10. The King of kings is for all time, but earthly kings come and go. More on Rev 17:10 later.

Revelation 17:10

There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue for a short time.

Often, when people hear something unusual related to the timing of events in Scripture, the same objection comes up: "But God's timing is not like ours. So, doesn't the Bible say, 'A day with the Lord is like thousand years and a thousand years a day'?" Well, not exactly. I like to ask the person, "Where in Scripture does it say that?" Most have no idea; they just heard it somewhere. But they pull it out, like a tire iron, to beat down any idea that doesn't fit the timing of inconvenient events, like the creation week or Revelation. Curious, the beginning and the ending are the two main areas where this beat down verse gets used the most, the two areas of strongest attack. Some don't want the Bible to mean what it plainly says.

Yes, it does say something similar in this verse:

> **2 Peter 3:8**
> But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that **with the Lord** one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. A reference to Ps 90:4.

The verse is metaphorical. The thousand-years metaphor will come up again in Revelation 20. Is it describing God's relation to time or man's, or something else? Notice first, who is this about? "With the Lord." It is not about us. Then there are two edges to this sword: "one day is as a thousand years" and "a thousand years as one day." They must go together. Remember (do not forget this one thing) this cannot be referring to some kind of time measurement because God is outside of time, which is exactly the point. Some try to make a formula out of these two time frames as though they were a mathematical identity. More nonsense!

This is why context is so important. What is the context of 2 Peter 3:8? Why did Peter quote Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses? The context has to do with the fulfillment of God's promises, not some esoteric unit of measuring time for divining God's secret plans. God is always on time. As someone said, "God is rarely early and never late." We should be more like Him. The primary reason for so much confusion is the failure to accept what is plainly written, and then apply correct application.

Also, with the fifth seal's opening, we get another look into heaven (Rev 6:9). We see the altar in heaven and hear the promise of vindication for Christ's martyrs (Rev 6:9–11) from the Christian's chief persecutors, the Jews. This vindication will occur in "a little while" (Rev 6:11). It comes with the final collapse of Jerusalem toward the end of the Jewish War (Dan 9:26).
This is in keeping with Revelation's other 16 near-term indicators:

1:1	shortly, soon	11:14	come quickly
1:3	near, in hand	12:12	short time
2:5	come quickly	16:17	it is done
2:16	come quickly	22:6	shortly, soon
3:11	come quickly	22:7	come quickly
3:20	at the door	22:10	near, in hand
6:11	a little while	22:12	come quickly
10:6	no more time	22:20	come quickly

Dispensationalist Mark Hitchcock dogmatically says that Revelation 1:1 (soon) and Revelation 20:10 (near) are bookends between which all of Revelation must be fulfilled within these two verses. His conclusion is that early dating is false because preterists believe that part of Revelation 20 is still future and fall outside his hyper-literal bookends. He then adds from 1 Jonn 2:18 "Little children, it is the last hour…," that the phrase "last hour" means the entire Church Age, now approaching 2000 years. Time is very flexible in his system. (Debate: Hank Hanegraaff vs Mark Hitchcock: *Dating of Revelation*, about 20 minutes in.

Preterists deny Mark's conjectures as a distortion of their position, a half-truth. I think distorting an opponent's position is a sad reflection on the integrity of such people. We are to be people of truth, and that means faithfully presenting an opponent's position correctly, no matter how distasteful.

I remember seeing a cartoon of the devil sitting on a curb, in front of a church, sobbing. A passerby asked the devil what was wrong. He said, “Those people in there are always lying about me.”

I acknowledge that there are some people that will feel misrepresented. The purpose of this book is to deal with the most general, widespread positions, not the myriad of variants that fill bookstores. I am happy to receive corrections to errors I make.

b. From “The Art of Revelation” by Jon Welton
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I have come to understand that the majority of the Book of Revelation was written regarding events that took place at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The scope of the book in your hands is not able to adequately address this topic; however, I do want to briefly discuss the issue of authorship. To believe that Revelation is about the AD 70 destruction, the main issue that must be addressed is the date of authorship. If the book was written in AD 96, as many modern teachers claim, then there is no way that my point of view could be valid. Yet, I believe that the overwhelming body of evidence proves beyond reasonable doubt that Revelation was more likely written before AD 68. Therefore, it is important to take a few minutes to establish the date of its writing. The primary reason some Bible teachers claim that the Book of Revelation was written around AD 96 is because John noted in Revelation 1:9 that he was on the island of Patmos at the time he received the Revelation. There is some historical evidence that John was exiled to Patmos under the reign of Domitian between AD 81 and AD 96. Therefore, the book might have been written during that time—or so some claim. In reality, there are also historical documents that tell us that John was exiled to Patmos at a much earlier date [under the reign of Nero]. Here I will share ten evidences that Revelation was written before AD 68.

1. The Syriac

We have the witness of one of the most ancient versions of the New Testament, called The Syriac. The second-century Syriac Version, called the Peshitto, says the following on the title page of the Book of Revelation: "Again the revelation which was upon the holy John the Evangelist from God when he was on the island of Patmos where he was thrown by the emperor Nero." We know that Nero Caesar ruled over the Roman Empire from AD 54 to AD 68. Therefore, John had to have been on the island of Patmos during this earlier period. One of the oldest versions of the Bible tells us when Revelation was written! That alone is a very compelling argument.

2. Revelation 17:10

When we look at the internal evidence, we find that there is also a very clear indicator regarding the date of authorship, found in Revelation 17:10: "They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while" (Rev. 17:10). This passage, which is speaking of the line of rulers in Rome, tells us exactly how many rulers had already come, which one was currently in power, and that the next one would only last a short while. Take a look at how that perfectly fits with Nero and the Roman Empire of the first century. The rule of the first seven Roman Emperor's is as follows:
Julius Caesar (49-44 BC)
Augustus (27 BC-AD 14)
Tiberius (AD 14-37)
Caligula (AD 37-41)
Claudius (AD 41-54) "Five have fallen..."
Nero (AD 54-68) "One is..."
Galba (June AD 68-January AD 69, a six-month rulership) "the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while."

Of the first seven kings, five had come and gone (Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius), the sixth was now in power (Nero), and one had not yet come (Galba), but would only remain a little time (six months). The current Caesar at the time of John's writing was the sixth Caesar, Nero.

MPH Note: here is the complete verse.

Revelation 17:9-10

9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10 There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue **a short time**.

Julius was the first "Caesar," something new and brought a fundamental shift to the Republic.
(1) Julius, (2) Augustus, (3) Tiberius, (4) Caligula, (5) Claudius,
(6) Nero, (7) Galba, (8) Otho, (9) Vitellius, and (10) Vespasian.

Number (6) Nero "one is" present at the time of the writing of the Revelation, and number 7 has "not yet come" (i.e., still in the future at the time of the writing). (7) Galba lasted six months.

I have seen some interesting gymnastics performed to make the "one that is" appear as Dominican in 96AD, which would have been unintelligible to anyone in the 1st or 2nd centuries. They are manipulations to justify a complicated external system over against the simplicity of the text.

Several have written on how well Nero Caesar fits so many aspects of the evil one of the Book of Revelation, including the number of his name, 666 (and 616 in some of the oldest manuscripts). One such book is *The Beast of Revelation* by Ken Gentry, Jr., examines the details. Another author is Jay Rogers. Some are listed at the end of this section. More are listed in the Bibliography.

3. Those Who Pierced Him

"Lo, he doth come with the clouds, and see him shall every eye, even those who did pierce him, and wail because of him shall all the tribes of the land. Yes! Amen" (Revelation 1:7 YLT). We already examined the Hebrew idiom, "coming on clouds," so we know that this speaks not of the return of Christ for the final judgment day, but of God coming to bring judgment on a city or nation (see Chapter 2 for more on this, also Is 19:1). The phrase "those who did pierce him" refers to the people of the first century. According to this passage, they were expected to be alive at the time of Revelation's fulfillment. How is that possible if Revelation was not going to come to pass until 2,000 or more years later? Consider also that "those who did pierce him" weren't even alive in AD 96 because they would have been killed in the slaughter of AD 70. This verse is a clear indicator of Revelation being written before AD 70.

4. Jewish Persecution of Christians

The Jewish persecution of Christianity in Revelation 6 and 11 indicates a pre-AD 70 authorship. The Jews were not in a position to persecute the early Church after they were slaughtered in AD 70. In fact, since the AD 70 slaughter, the Jews have never been in a position to be able to persecute Christians.

5. Judaizing Heretics in the Church

The activity of the Judaizing heretics in the Church (see Rev. 2:6,9,15; 3:9) would not have been as large of an issue after Paul's epistles had been circulated. Therefore, an early date of authorship allows for the heretics to be a larger problem.

6. Existence of Jerusalem and the Temple

The existence and integrity of Jerusalem and the Temple (see Rev. 11) suggest a date before the destruction of AD 70.

7. Time-related Passages

The internal time-related portions of Revelation indicate that the events it foretells will come to pass shortly (see Rev. 1:1,3; 22:10,20). If this was read with an unbiased perspective, one would conclude that Revelation was not written about events 2,000 years in the future. (See also Appendix A, Time Passages)

8. John's Appearance in AD 96

Another reason to believe that the Book of Revelation was written at the earlier date is because Jerome noted in his writings **that John was seen in AD 96** and that **he was so old and infirm** that "he was with difficulty carried to the church and could speak only a few words to the people. "We must put this fact together with what Revelation 10:11 says: that John must "prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings." It is difficult to imagine that John would be able to speak to many nations and many kings at any date after AD 96 since he was already elderly and feeble.

9. Timetable Comparison with Daniel

In Daniel, the author was told to "seal up the vision, for it is a long way off" (Dan. 12:4)—which referred to a 483-year wait until Jesus came to fulfill the prophecy. By contrast, in Revelation, John was told to "not seal up the vision because it concerns things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev 22:10). If 483 years was considered a long way off, meaning that the vision should be sealed, it makes no sense that 2,000 plus years would be considered "shortly to come to pass" and not to be sealed up. Clearly, Revelation shouldn't be sealed because it was about to come to pass at the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem.

10. Only Seven Churches

The existence of only seven churches in Asia Minor (see Rev. 1) indicates a writing date before the greater expansion of Christianity into that region.

11. The Muratorian Canon (insertion by MPH)

The Muratorian Canon (also called the Muratorian Fragment) is an ancient list of New Testament books - the oldest such list we have found. The original document, which was probably written in Greek, is dated to about AD 180 and lists 22 of the 27 books that were later included in the New Testament of the Christian Bible.

The Muratorian Canon was discovered by Italian historian Ludovico Muratori in the Ambrosian Library in northern Italy and was published by him in 1740. The manuscript copy that Muratori discovered was written in Latin and has been dated to the 7th or 8th century AD. Several internal indicators have convinced most experts that the original Muratorian Canon should be dated near the end of the 2nd century (c. AD 180).
https://www.gotquestions.org/Muratorian-Canon.html
https://www.christian-history.org/muratorian-canon.html

The portion of the text of particular interest states that ‘the blessed Apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes by name to only seven specific churches.’ The author reasons that even though Paul wrote multiple times to places like Corinth or Thessalonica, his focus on seven distinct locations represents the universal Church.

While most focus on the canonical list or seven churches aspect of the text, I want to focus on the phrase ‘following the rule of his predecessor John.’ This sets up a chronology. If John was Paul’s predecessor and established a ‘rule’ of writing to seven churches, then John’s writing the Revelation predates Paul’s completion of his letters to the churches. Paul was martyred about 64/65AD during the reign of Nero Caesar. Nero committed suicide in 68AD, throwing the empire into chaos.

This is another confirmation for the writing of the Book of Revelation prior to the destruction of the temple in 70AD. I am saying it was a prophecy of the soon coming wrath of God being poured out on the faithless nation that betrayed and murdered the Son of God. Mat 24:2-34.

The Other Perspective

Those who believe in the later date of authorship for the Book of Revelation are mainly leaning on the fact that Irenaeus the Bishop of Lyons (AD 120-202) claimed that John wrote while on Patmos under Domitian's reign, about 96AD. This alone could seem compelling, except that Irenaeus is notorious for being terrible at accurately recording dates and times in his writings. Irenaeus is the same Church father who claimed that Jesus's ministry lasted nearly twenty years, from the age of thirty until the age of fifty. There is no internal evidence for a later date of authorship; one must lean only upon external evidence to force this conclusion. Because of the overwhelming body of evidence, I firmly believe that Revelation was written during Nero's reign and before his death in AD 68. I believe that Revelation was written regarding the coming judgment and destruction of Jerusalem. Yet, I also know that, at this time, I personally am not called to add my thoughts to the many great works written regarding the Book of Revelation from this point of view.

MPH Note – Let's look at what Irenaeus wrote.

Irenaeus (130-202) "Against Heresies - Book 5," was originally written in Greek, but all that remains are Latin copies which are then translated to English. So, we have a translation of a translation. Irenaeus wrote:

> "We will not, however, incur the risk of speaking positively as to the name of antichrist. For if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For ***that*** was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, toward the end of Domitian's reign (81-96AD)."

The word "***that***" (in italics) "For ***that*** was seen…" is the big question. It all hinges on this word. What was seen? Was Irenaeus talking about John himself was seen or that the Book of Revelation was seen or that was when John beheld the apocalyptic vision? Nobody knows, but many offer opinions. I won't, except to point out the complications. As always, I want to get to the presuppositions.

> To frame the issue a different way, we're basically choosing which of the following statements makes better sense:
> a. John could have revealed the name of the Antichrist, because John was seen alive until very recently.
> b. John could have revealed the name of the Antichrist, because John saw the apocalyptic vision very recently.
> http://www.theironcladnetwork.com/2017/01/irenaeus-and-date-of-revelation_21.html

And this confusing quote, and those that quote Irenaeus, is the best that advocates of the late date for the writing of Revelation have to offer. A translation of a translation is very weak indeed, especially when so much clearer information is available. Contrast the ambiguity of Irenaeus and the clarity of the Peshitto.

Elsewhere, Irenaeus talks about **ancient copies of the Book of Revelation** (Against Heresies, 5.30.1). Note that the copies were 'ancient' in Irenaeus' time (Also *Before Jerusalem Fell, 51).*

All of this and much more can be found in the book *Before Jerusalem Fell* by Dr. Ken Gentry, Jr. The topic at hand was the subject of his doctoral dissertation.

Clement of Alexandria also made a reference to the release of John from Patmos to Ephesus following the death of the tyrant (Nero):

XLII. And that you may be still more confident, that repenting thus truly there remains for you a sure hope of salvation, listen to a tale? which is not a tale but a narrative, handed down and committed to the custody of memory, about the **Apostle John. For when, on the tyrant's death** (Nero, 68AD)**, he returned to Ephesus from the isle of Patmos**, he went away, being invited, to the contiguous territories of the nations, here to appoint bishops, there to set in order whole Churches, there to ordain such as were marked out by the Spirit.
Clement of Alexandria (150- ~215AD), *Quis Dives Salvetur,* ~210AD.
https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/who-is-the-rich-man-that-shall-be-saved-quis-dives-salvetur-11354

For more information, I will suggest some great writings in this regard:
The Great Tribulation by David Chilton
Days of Vengeance by David Chilton
Paradise Restored by David Chilton
Revelation by Gordon Fee
Revelation for Everyone by N.T. Wright
The Beast of Revelation by Ken Gentry Jr.

Conclusion
Considering the evidence used to support both the earlier date and the later date for the writing of the Book of Revelation brings us to a simple conclusion. The most logical and historically responsible conclusion, based on all the evidence, is that Revelation was, in fact, written prior to AD 68 (the death of Nero) and many of the events foretold in it refer to the destruction of Jerusalem concluded in AD 70.

End of Welton quote

12. Some Other Quotes

In the discussion prompted by my post on "The **parables of delay** and the question of **dual fulfilment**" Paulf argued that it's impossible to resolve the tension in Jesus's apocalyptic discourse between the early references to the destruction of Jerusalem and the later statement about the Son of man: "we know from history that the son of man did not **come through the clouds and set up a kingdom**." So either Jesus was wrong, which many have argued; or he was speaking about something that would happen in an entirely different time-frame, presumably at the end of history. (https://www.postost.net/2015/11/symbolism-son-man-coming-clouds-meaning-kingdom, October 12, 2010 - 8:36 a.m., Andrew Perriman).

Question: What is wrong with this paragraph? His entire comment has the same presupposition, stated in various ways. What is his presuppositions? There are at least three.

"First, sometimes the events that are expected soon are not the very coming of Jesus, but things leading up to the coming of Jesus. Here's an example: Matthew 24:33, "So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates." Next verse, and this is the problem verse for a lot of people: "Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Matthew 24:34).

Now, notice carefully the phrase, **"all these things"** that are going to take place **within a generation**, does not include the actual coming of the Lord, because in the previous verse it says, "When you see all these things," the very phrase of verse 34 used in verse 33, "You know that he is near," not already here. The fact that these things will happen **within a generation**, these preparations for his coming, does not mean that his coming would happen in a generation.

He has set in motion an end time process of gathering messianic people. He has fulfilled many end time prophecies. **We are in the last days — we have been for two thousand years** — and therefore Jesus **is like** a king in complete control, standing with his army outside the city, waiting to take it captive. Nothing can stand between him and that capture except his own choice." (John Piper – https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/jesus-said-hed-return-soon-so-where-is-he).

MPH~ Piper's entire picture is wrong. The city has ALREADY been captured! The strong man has ALREADY been bound. All that remains is the spoiling of what was his house (Lk 4:6, Mk 3:27), which is part of the job of the Church (Mt 16:18, 28:19). Also, Jesus didn't say "a generation," He said, "this generation," referring to His audience. How can "at hand" or "soon" mean 2000+ years? Nowhere in scripture is prophetic time handled in such a sloppy manner. I heard Pat Robertson say something similar, that we have been in the last days for 2000 years. Same for Mark Hitchcock. Instead of simply believing what is plainly written, they distort the time verses to fit an external system. In order to keep the end-times open ended they ignore the conclusion verses (Mt 23:36, 24:2, 14, 34), and more. Imagine if every biblical doctrine was treated with such plasticity! This is another example of how exterior beliefs control how biblical themes are viewed then prominent leaders confuse the people with bold claims. They are brilliant in other areas, but in this they are wrong.

13. Conclusion

The legacy and damage of Premillennialism in general and Dispensationalism in particular can hardly be exaggerated. It is at the heart of our cultural decay. The projection of fulfilled prophecy into the future distorts almost every facet of the Gospel and purpose of the Church. The condition of the world today is nothing like the Gospel narrative of the victorious, overcoming picture painted in the New Testament, demonstrated in the discipling of the Roman Empire. The fallout of failure has two distinctive fruits for God's people:

1. The church has no motivation to fix any of the problems on display all around the world, because Jesus is coming soon, and we will all fly away to our heavenly home and our very own mansion. The necessary drive to do the hard work is simply doesn't exist. Why isn't every election ballot filled with Christians? The only people with real answers, the wisdom of Heaven, don't believe they should be involved. One hundred years of a "theology of non-involvement" have taken their toll. Many will shake their head and bemoan how bad things are but quickly comfort themselves with "We ain't seen nothing yet. Glad we won't be here." And the world that the Father loves and Jesus died to save slides into increasing corruption.
2. Many will be totally confused by Jesus's failure to show up as they had been assured, again. They are totally unprepared spiritually, psychologically, and emotionally to deal with severe hardship. We have become dependent on the props of the world instead of Christ. The church is utterly incapable of managing the trouble that is coming. How many will abandon Jesus because they had more faith in the any-minute rapture than Jesus's sustaining power? What about all the preachers that misled them?

To be sure, God's plan is always moving forward. He will accomplish His word, not our vain imaginations. The great task of history has been to flow with His plan. There is much to do to finish the Great Commission.

Ecclesiastes 2:24
Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

Ecclesiastes 4:12
Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Matthew 11:28-30
28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Hebrews 3:18-19
18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:9-11
9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Appendix A

Time Frame References – these passages refer to time and give time frame clues

The scripture is not sloppy about the use of time and time frames relating to prophetic events. Not all prophetic events have time frames, but when they do, we should pay attention.

By category:

Last Days/Hour
Acts 2:17, 3:24
2 Tm 3:1, Heb 1:2
1 Pet 1:20, 2 Pt 3:3
1 Jn 2:18

That/Last Day
Mt 7:22, 26:29
Mk 14:25, Lk 6:23, 10:12
Jn 6:39-54, 11:24, 12:48
1 Th 5:4
2 Tm 1:12, 18, 4:8

Not taste death until
Mt 16:28, Mk 9:1, Lk 9:27

Soon/Immediately
Mt 21:19-20, Lk 2:49
Acts 5:10, 12:23
Rom 16:20

Shortly/little while
Rev 1:1, 6:10

Quickly
Mt 5:25, 28:7-8
Rev 2:5, 16, 3:11
Rev 11:14
Rev 22:7, 12, 20

This Generation
Mt 11:16, 12:41-42
Mt 23:36, 24:34
Mk 8:12, 13:30
Lk 7:31, 11:29-32, 50-51
Lk 17:25, 21:32

End of the age/world
Mt 13:39-40, 49
Mt 24:3, 28:20
1 Cor. 10:11
Heb 9:26

At/in hand/near
Mt 3:2, 4:17, 10:7
Mt 26:18, 45-46
Mk 1:15, 14:42
Lk 21:27, 31, Jn 7:2
Rm 13:12
Php 4:5, 2 Tm 4:6
Jam 5:8, 1 Pt 4:7
Rev 1:3, 22:10

At the door
Mt 24:33
Jam 5:9, Rev 3:20

Related Texts – these texts refer to ideas related to the coming of Jesus in the first century.

Come/Coming/Clouds
Mt 10:23, 24:30, 26:64
Mk 13:26, 14:62
Lk 21:27, Acts 1:11,
Rv 1:7, Is 19:1, Zeph 1:14-15

Whole/all world
Mt 24:14, Mk 16:15, Lk 2:1
Ac 2:5, 11:18, 22:15
Rom 1:8, 16:26
Col 1:6, 23, 1 Pt 5:9
1 Jn 2:2, 5:19

The Day of the LORD/Wrath
Jer 47:10, Is 2:12, 13:6, 9
Ez 13:5, 30:3, Am 5:18-20
Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 31, 3:14
Obad 1:15, Zeph 1:7, 14-18
Mal 4:5, Rv 6:16-17

The Day of Vengeance
Jer 47:10, Prov 6:34
Is 61:2, 63:4 Lk 4:18-19
Lk 21:22, 1Pt 4:17

Antichrist
1 Jn 2:18, 22, 4:3, 2 Jn 1:7

Other Related Passages
Dan 2:31-(35)-45
Dan 7:13-14, Lk 1:33
Dan 9:1-3, 24-27, Is 9:7
Mt 13:22, Lk 13:21
Mt 6:10, 28:18-20
Ps 97:5, Mic 1:3-4
Acts 2:19-20

More Related Passages
Rock fall on us, Luke 23:30 = Rev 6:16-17
Strong man bound, Mt 12:29, Mk 3:27, Lk 11:21 = Rev 20:1-7
Times of gentiles, Lk 21:24 = Rev 11:2, Rom 11:25

NT Verses In order of appearance:

Mt 3:2, 4:17	at hand/near
Mt 5:25	quickly
Mt 10:7	at hand/near
Mt 11:16	this generation
Mt 12:41-42	this generation
Mt 13:39-40, 49	end of age/world
Mt 14:42	at hand/near
Mt 16:28	not taste death until
Mt 23:36	this generation
Mt 24:3	end of age/world
Mt 24:14	whole world
Mt 24:34	this generation
Mt 26:18, 45-46	at hand/near
Mt 28:7-8	quickly
Mt 28:20	end of age/world
Mk 1:15	at hand/near
Mk 8:12	this generation
Mk 9:1	not taste death until
Mk 13:30	this generation
Mk 16:15	whole world
Lk 2:1	whole world
Lk 7:31	this generation
Lk 9:27	not taste death until
Lk 11:29-32, 50-51	this generation
Lk 17:25	this generation
Lk 21:27, 31	at hand/near
Lk 21:32	this generation
Jn 6:39-54	that day
Jn 7:2	at hand/near
Jn 11:24, 12:48	that day
Act 2:5	every nation
Act 2:17, 3:24	last/these days
Act 11:18, 22:15	whole world
Rm 1:8	whole world
Rm 10:8, 13:12	at hand/near
Rom 16:20	soon
1 Cor. 10:11	ends of the ages
Php 4:5	at hand/near
Col 1:6, 23	whole world
2 Tm 3:1	last days
2 Tm 4:6	at hand/near
Jam 5:8	at hand/near
Heb 1:1-2	last days
Heb 9:26	end of age/world
Jam 5:9	at the door
1 Pt 1:20	last days
1 Pt 4:7	at hand/near
1 pt 4:17	begin judgment
1 Pt 5:9	whole world
2 Pt 3:3	last days
1 Jn 2:2	whole world
1 Jn 2:18	last hour, antichrist
1 Jn 2:22, 4:3	antichrist
1 Jn 5:19	whole world
2 Jn 1:7	antichrist
Rv 1:1	shortly, soon
Rv 1:3	in hand
Rv 2:5, 16	quickly
Rv 3:11	quickly
Rv 3:20	at the door
Rv 6:10	little while
Rv 11:14, 12:20	quickly
Rv 22:7, 12, 20	quickly
Rv 22:10	at hand/near

Appendix B
The Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem
by Nehemiah A. Nisbett, Canterbury UK, 1787
https://web.archive.org/web/20190601012747/http:/www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1787_nisbett_doj.html

The Destruction of Jerusalem
by George Peter Holford, 1805
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The Destruction of Jerusalem:
An Absolute and Irresistible Proof of
THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF
CHRISTIANITY:
INCLUDING A NARRATIVE OF
THE CALAMITIES WHICH BEFELL THE JEWS

So far as they tend to verify
OUR LORD'S PREDICTIONS
relative to that event.
By George Peter Holford
(Written in 1805)

…Such were the questions of the disciples, in answer to which our Lord gave them a particular account of the several important events that would precede, as well as of the prognostics that would announce the approaching desolations, including suitable directions for their conduct under the various trials to which they were to be exposed. He commences with a caution: "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many" (Matt. 24:4-5).
The necessity for this friendly warning soon appeared. Within one year after our Lord's ascension, Dositheus the Samaritan arose, who had the boldness to assert that he was the Messiah of whom Moses prophesied, while his disciple Simon Magus deluded multitudes into a belief that he, himself, was the *"great power of God."*
About three years afterward, another Samaritan impostor appeared and declared that he would show the people the sacred utensils, said to have been deposited by Moses, in Mount Gerizim. Induced by an idea that the Messiah, their great deliverer, had now come, an armed multitude assembled under him, but Pilate speedily defeated them and slew their chief.
While Cuspius Fadus was procurator in Judea, another deceiver arose, whose name was Theudas. This man actually succeeded so far as to persuade a very great multitude to take their belongings and follow him to Jordan, assuring them that the river would divide at his command. Fadus, however, pursued them with a troop of horses and slay many of them, including the impostor himself, whose head was cut off and carried to Jerusalem.
Under the government of Felix, deceivers rose up daily in Judea and persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness, assuring them that they should there behold conspicuous signs and wonders performed by the Almighty. Of these, Felix, from time to time, apprehended many and put them to death. About this period (AD 55), Felix the celebrated Egyptian impostor arose, who collected thirty thousand followers and persuaded them to accompany him to the Mount of Olives, telling them that from thence they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall down at his command—as a prelude to the capture of the Roman garrison and to their obtaining the sovereignty of the city. The Roman governor, however, apprehending this to be the beginning of revolt, immediately attacked them, slew four hundred of them, and dispersed the rest, but the Egyptian escaped.
In the time of Porcius Festus (AD 60), another distinguished impostor seduced the people by promising them deliverance from the Roman yoke if they would follow him into the wilderness. But Festus sent out an armed force, which speedily destroyed both the deceiver and his followers. In short, impostors to a divine commission continually and fatally deceived the people, at once both justifying the caution and fulfilling the prediction of our Lord.
If it be objected that none of these impostors, except Dositheus, assumed the name of Messiah, we reply, that the groveling expectations of the Jews was directed to a Messiah who should merely deliver them from the Roman yoke and *"restore the kingdom to Jerusalem,"* and such were the pretensions of these deceivers. This expectation, indeed, is the only true solution of these strange and reputed insurrections, which will naturally remind the reader of the following prophetic expressions of our Lord: *"I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive." "If they shall say unto you, 'Behold he is in the desert!' go not forth. They will show (or pretend to show) great signs and wonders."* [See Matthew 24:23-26.]
[Wars and Rumors of Wars]
Our Savior thus proceeded:
And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet, for nation shall rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences: all these are the beginnings of sorrows (Matthew 24:6-8; Luke 21:11).

"Wars and rumors of wars," These commotions, like distant thunder, that forebodes the approaching storm, *"At first heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,"* were so frequent from the death of our Lord until the destruction of Jerusalem that whole interval might, with propriety, be appealed to in illustration of this prophecy. One hundred and fifty of the copious pages of Josephus, which contain the history of this period, are everywhere stained with blood. To particularize a few instances: About three years after the death of Christ, a war broke out between Herod and Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea, in which the army of the former was cut off. This was *"kingdom rising against kingdom."*

Wars are usually preceded by rumors. It may, therefore, appear absurd to attempt a distinct elucidation of this part of the prophecy; nevertheless, it ought not to be omitted that, about that time, the emperor Caligula, having ordered his statue to be placed in the Temple of Jerusalem, and the Jews having persisted to refuse him, the whole nation was so much alarmed by the mere apprehension of war that they neglected even to till their lands! The storm, however, blew over.

About this period, a great number of Jews, on account of a pestilence that raged at Babylon, removed from that city to Seleucia, where the Greeks and Syrians rose against them and destroyed of this devoted people more than five myriads! "The extent of this slaughter," says Josephus, "had no parallel in any former period of their history." Again, about five years after this dreadful massacre, there happened a severe contest between the Jews at Perea and the Philadelphians, regarding the limits of a city called Mia, and many of the Jews were slain. This was *"nation rising up against nation."*

Four years afterward, under Cumanus, a Roman soldier offered an indignity to the Jews within the precincts of the Temple. This they violently resented, but upon the approach of the Romans in great force, their terror was so excessive and their flight so disorderly that not less than ten thousand Jews were trodden to death in the streets. This, again, was *"nation rising up against nation."* Four years more had not elapsed before the Jews made war against the Samaritans and ravaged their country. The people of Samaria had murdered a Galilean, who was going up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and the Jews thus revenged it.

At Caesarea, the Jews had a sharp contention with the Syrians for the government of the city, and an appeal was made to who decreed it to the Syrians. This event laid the foundation of a most cruel and sanguinary contest between the two nations. The Jews, mortified by disappointment and inflamed by jealousy, rose against the Syrians, who successfully repelled them. In the city of Caesarea alone, upwards of twenty thousand Jews were slain. The flame, however, was not now quenched; it spread its destructive rage wherever the Jews and Syrians dwelt together in the same place: throughout every city, town, and village, mutual animosity and slaughter prevailed. At Damascus, Tyre, Ascalon, Gadara, and Scythopolis, the carnage was dreadful. At the first of these cities, ten thousand Jews were slain in one hour, and at Scythopolis, thirteen thousand treacherously in one night.

At Alexandria, the Jews, aggrieved by the oppressions of the Romans, rose against them. But the Romans, gaining the ascendancy, slew of that nation fifty thousand persons, sparing neither infants nor the aged. And after this, at the siege of Jopata, not less than forty thousand Jews perished.

While these destructive contests prevailed in the East, the western parts of the Roman Empire were rent by the fierce contentious of Galba, Otho, and Vertellis. Of which three emperors, it is remarkable that they all, together with Nero, their immediate predecessor, died a violent death within the short space of eighteen months. Finally, the whole nation of the Jews took up arms against the Romans, King Agrippa, etc. and provoked that dreadful war which, in a few years, deluged Judea in blood and laid its capital in ruins.

If it be here objected, that, because wars are events of frequent occurrence, it would be improper to refer to supernatural foresight in a successful prediction respecting them, I would here reply that much of this objection will be removed by considering the incompetency of even statesmen themselves in foretelling the condition, only for a few years, of the very nation whose affairs they administer. It is a well-known fact that the present minister of Great Britain, [at the time of authorship, 1805, the Prime Minister was William Pitt] on the very eve of the late long and destructive war with the French Republic, held out to this country a picture of fifteen successive years of peace. Indeed, the points on which peace and war often depend baffle all calculations from present aspects, and a rumor of war that is so loud and so alarming as even to suspend the operations of farming may terminate, as we have just seen, into nothing but rumor.

Further, let it be considered that the wars to which this part of our Lord's prophecy referred were to be of two kinds and that the events corresponded accordingly. They occurred within the period to which he had assigned them, and they fell with the most destructive severity on the Jews, to whom the prophecy at large chiefly related. Further, that the person who predicted them was not a statesman, but a carpenter's son! On this subject, more in another place.

[Earthquakes]

"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places." Of these significant emblems of political commotion, there occurred several within the scene of this prophecy, and as our Savior predicted, they happened in divers places. In the reign of Claudius, there was one at Rome and another at Apamea in Syria, where many of the Jews resided. The earthquake at the latter place was so destructive that the emperor, in order to relieve the distresses of the inhabitants, remitted its tribute for five years. Both these earthquakes are recorded by Tacitus. There was one also, during the same reign, in Crete. This is mentioned by Philostratus in his *Life of Apollonius,* who also says that there were others "at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and Samos; in all which places Jews had settled."

In the reign of Nero, there was an earthquake at Laodicea. Tacitus records this also. It is likewise mentioned by Eusebius and Orosius, who add that Hieropolis and Colose, as well as Laodicea, were overthrown by earthquakes. There was also one in Campania during this reign (of this both Tacitus and Seneca speak) and another at Rome in the reign of Galba, recorded by Suetonius. To all those may be added the earthquakes that happened on the dreadful night when the Idumeans were

excluded from Jerusalem, a short time before the siege commenced. Josephus says, "A heavy storm burst on them during the night; violent winds arose, accompanied with the most excessive rains, with constant lightnings, most tremendous thunderings, and with dreadful roarings of earthquakes. It seemed as if the system of the world had been confounded for the destruction of mankind; and one might well conjecture that these were signs of no common events!"

[Famines]

Our Lord predicted *"famines"* also. Of these, the principal one was that which Agabus foretold would happen in the days of Claudius, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. It begun in the fourth year of his reign and was of long continuance. It extended through Greece and even into Italy, but was felt most severely in Judea and especially at Jerusalem, where many perished for want of bread. This famine is recorded by Josephus also, who relates that "an assaron of corn was sold for five drachmae" [about a week's wages]. It is likewise noticed by Eusebius and Orosius. To alleviate this terrible calamity, Helena, queen of Adiabena, who was at that time in Jerusalem, ordered large supplies of grain to be sent from Alexandria, and Izates, her son, consigned vast sums to the governors of Jerusalem to be applied to the relief of the more indigent sufferers. The Gentile Christian converts residing in foreign countries also sent, at the instance of Saint Paul, liberal contributions to relieve the distresses of their Jewish brethren (see 1 Cor. 16:3).

Dion Cassius relates that there was likewise a famine in the first year of Claudius that prevailed at Rome and in other parts of Italy. And in the eleventh year of the same emperor, there was another famine mentioned by Eusebius. To these may be added the famines that afflicted the inhabitants of several of the cities of Galilee and Judea, which were besieged and taken previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, where the climax of national misery, arising from famine and every other cause, was so awfully completed.

[Pestilences]

Our Savior adds *"pestilences"* (see Luke 21:11), likewise. Pestilence treads upon the heels of famine; it may, therefore, reasonably be presumed that this terrible scourge accompanied the famines, which have just been recounted above. History, however, particularly distinguishes two instances of this calamity that occurred before the commencement of the Jewish war. The first took place at Babylon about AD 40, and it raged so alarmingly that great multitudes of Jews fled from that city to Seleucia for safety, as has been hinted at already. The other happened at Rome in AD 65, and it carried off prodigious multitudes. Both Tacitus and Suetonius also record that similar calamities prevailed during this period in various parts of the Roman Empire.

After Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Titus, pestilential diseases soon made their appearance there to aggravate the miseries and deepen the horrors of the siege. They were partly occasioned by the immense multitudes that were crowded together in the city, partly by the putrid emanations that arose from the unburied dead, and partly from the spread of famine.

[Heavenly Signs]

Our Lord proceeded, *"And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven"* (Luke 21:11). Josephus has collected the chief of these portents together and introduces his account by a reflection on the strangeness of that infatuation that could induce his countrymen to give credit to impostors and unfounded reports, while they disregarded the divine admonitions that were confirmed, as he [Josephus] asserts they were, by the following extraordinary signs:

1. "A meteor, resembling a sword, hung over Jerusalem during one whole year." This could not be a comet, for it was stationary, and was visible for twelve successive months. A sword too, though a fit emblem for destruction, but ill represents a comet."
2. "On the eighth of the month Zanthicus, (before the feast of unleavened bread) at the ninth hour of the night, there shone round about the altar, and the circumjacent buildings of the temple, a light equal to the brightness of the day, which continued for the space of half an hour." This could not be the effect of lightning, nor of a vivid aurora borealis, for it was confined to a particular spot, and the light shone uninterrupted for thirty minutes.
3. "As the High Priest were leading a heifer to the altar to be sacrificed, she brought forth a lamb, in the midst of the temple." Such is the strange account given by Josephus. Some may regard it as a "Grecian fable," while others may discern in this prodigy a miraculous rebuke of Jewish infidelity and impiety, for rejecting the antitypical Lamb, who had offered Himself as an atonement "once for all" and who, by thus completely fulfilling their design, had virtually abrogated the Levitical sacrifices. However this may be, the circumstances of the prodigy are remarkable. It did not occur in an obscure part of the city, but in the Temple; it did not at an ordinary time, but at the Passover—the season of our Lord's crucifixion—in the presence, not of the vulgar merely, but of the High Priests and their attendants, and when they were leading the sacrifice to the altar.
4. "About the sixth hour of the night, the eastern gate of the temple was seen to open without human assistance." When the guards informed the Curator of this event, he sent men to assist them in shutting it, and with great difficulty they succeeded. This gate, as has been observed already, was of solid brass and required twenty men to close it every evening. It could not have been opened by a "strong gust of wind," or a "slight earthquake" for, as Josephus says, "It was secured by iron bolts and bars that were let down into a large threshold, consisting of one entire stone."
5. "Soon after the feast of the Passover, in various parts of the country, before the setting of the sun, chariots and armed men were seen in the air, passing round about Jerusalem." Neither could this portentous spectacle be occasioned by the aurora borealis, for it occurred before the setting of the sun; nor could it have been merely the fancy of a few villagers, gazing at the heavens, for it was seen in various parts of the country.

6. "At the subsequent feast of Pentecost, while the priests were going, by night, into the inner temple to perform their customary ministrations, they first felt, as they said, a shaking, accompanied by an indistinct murmuring, and afterwards voices as of a multitude, saying, in a distinct and earnest manner, 'let us depart hence'." This gradation will remind the reader of that awful transaction that the feast of Pentecost was principally instituted to commemorate.

First, a shaking was heard; this would naturally induce the priests to listen, An unintelligible murmur succeeds it; this would more powerfully arrest their attention, and while it was thus awakened , they heard, says Josephus, the voices, as of a multitude, distinctly pronouncing the words, "let us depart hence." And accordingly, before the period for celebrating this feast returned, the Jewish war had commenced, and in the space of three years afterward, Jerusalem was surrounded by the Roman army, the temple converted into a citadel, and its sacred courts streaming with the blood of human victims.

7. As the last and most fearful omen, Josephus relates that one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a rustic of the lower class, during the Feast of Tabernacles, suddenly exclaimed in the temple, "A voice from the east a voice from the west—a voice from the four winds—a voice against Jerusalem and the temple—a voice against bridegrooms and brides—a voice against the whole people!" These words he incessantly proclaimed aloud, both day and night, through all the streets of Jerusalem for seven years and five months together. He began at a time (AD 62) when the city was in a state of peace and was overflowing with prosperity, and he ceased amidst the horrors of the siege.

This disturber, having excited the attention of the magistracy, was brought before Albinus the Roman governor, who commanded that he should be scourged. But the severest stripes drew from him neither tears nor supplications. As he never thanked those who relieved him, so neither did he complain of the injustice of those who struck him. And no other answer could the governor obtain to his interrogatories, but his usual denunciation of "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" which he still continued to proclaim through the city, but especially during the festivals, when his manner became more earnest and the tone of his voice louder. At length, on the commencement of the siege, he ascended the walls and, in a more powerful voice than ever, exclaimed, "Woe, woe to this city, this temple, and this people!" And then, with a presentment of his own death, added, "Woe, woe to myself!" He had scarcely uttered these words when a stone from one of the Roman engines killed him on the spot.

Such are the prodigies related by Josephus, and excepting the first, he places them in the year immediately preceding the Jewish war. Several of them are recorded also by Tacitus. Nevertheless, it ought to be observed that they are received by Christian writers cautiously and with various degrees of credit. Those, however, who are most skeptical and who resolve them into natural causes, allow the "superintendence of God to awaken his people by some of these means." Whatever the fact, in this respect, it is clear that they correspond to our Lord's prediction of "fearful sights and great signs from heaven" and ought to be deemed a sufficient answer to the objector who demands whether any such appearances are respectably recorded.

[Great Persecution]

The next prediction of our Lord related to the persecution of His disciples: *"They shall lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake;"* (Luke 21:12*)—"and they shall deliver you up to councils, and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten;"* (Mark 13:9)—*"and some of You shall they cause to be put to death"* (Luke 21:16). In the very infancy of the Christian Church, these unmerited and unprovoked cruelties began to be inflicted.

Our Lord and his forerunner, John the Baptist, had already been put to death. The apostles Peter and John were first imprisoned, and then, together with the other apostles, were scourged before the Jewish council. Stephen, after confounding the Sanhedrim with his irresistible eloquence, was stoned to death. Herod Agrippa *"stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church,"* beheaded James the brother of John, and again imprisoned Peter, designing to put him to death also.

Saint Paul pleaded before the Jewish council at Jerusalem and before Felix the Roman governor, who trembled on the judgment-seat, while the intrepid prisoner *"reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come!"* Two years afterward, he was brought before the tribunal of Festus (who had succeeded Felix in the government). King Agrippa the younger was present and, while the governor scoffed, ingenuously acknowledged the force of the apostle's eloquence and, half-convinced, exclaimed, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* Lastly, he pleaded before the emperor Nero at Rome. He was also brought with Silas before the rulers at Philippi, where both of them were scourged and imprisoned. Paul was likewise imprisoned two years in Judea and afterward twice at Rome, each time for the space of two years. He was scourged by the Jews five times, thrice beaten with rods, and once stoned.

Paul himself, before his conversion, was also an instrument of fulfilling the predictions. Saint Luke relates of him that *"he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hating men and women, committed them to prison; when they were put to death he gave his voice against them; he punished them oft in every synagogue, and, persecuted them even into strange cities";* and to this agree his own declarations (Acts 26:10-11; see Gal. 1:23).

At length, about two years before the Jewish war, the first general persecution commenced at the instigation of the emperor Nero, "who," says Tacitus, "inflicted upon the Christians punishments exquisitely painful." Multitudes suffered a cruel martyrdom amidst derision and insults, and among the rest, were the venerable apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

Our Lord continues—*"And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake"* (Matt. 24:9). The hatred from which the above-recited persecutions sprang was not provoked on the part of the Christians by a resistance to established authority or by any violations of law, but was the unavoidable consequence of their sustaining the name and imitating the character of their master. "It was a war," says Tertullian, "against the very name; to be a Christian was of itself crime enough." And to the same effect is that expression of Pliny in his letter to Trajan: "I asked them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it, I asked

them a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment, and those who persevered I commanded to be led away to death." It is added, *"Of all nations."* Whatever animosity or dissensions might subsist between the Gentiles and the Jews on other points, they were at all times ready to unite and co-operate in the persecution of the humble followers of Him who came to be a light to the former and the glory of the latter.

[Cold Love]

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another" (Matt. 24:10). Concerning this fact, the following decisive testimony of Tacitus may suffice. Speaking of the persecutions of the Christians under Nero, to which we have just alluded, he adds, "Several were seized, who confessed, and by their discovery a great multitude of others were convicted and barbarously executed."

[Gospel Preached in the Whole World]

"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end (i.e. of the Jewish dispensation) *come"* (Matt. 24:14). Of the fulfillment of this prediction of the epistles of Saint Paul—addressed to the Christians at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica—and those of Peter—to such as resided in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia—are monuments now standing. For neither of these apostles were living when the Jewish war commenced. Saint Paul, too, in his epistle to the Romans, informs them that *"their faith was spoken of throughout the world;" [Rom. 1:8]* and in that to the Colossians he observes that the *"Gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven." [Col. 1:23]* Clement, who was a fellow-laborer with the apostle, relates of him that "he taught the whole world righteousness, travelling from the East westward to the borders of the ocean." Eusebius says that "the Apostles preached the Gospel in all the world, and that some of them passed beyond the bounds of the ocean, and visited the Britannic isles"; so says Theodore also.

"It appears," says Bishop Newton, "from the writers of the history of the church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was not only preached in the Lesser Asia, and Greece, and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world, but was likewise propagated as far northward as Scythia, as far southward as Ethiopia, as far eastward as Parthia and India, as far westward as Spain and Britain." And Tacitus asserts that "the Christian religion, which arose in Judea, spread over many parts of the world, and extended to Rome itself, where the professors of it, as early as the time of Nero, amounted to a vast multitude," insomuch that their numbers excited the jealousy of the government.

Thus completely was fulfilled a prediction contrary to every conclusion that could have been grounded on moral probability and to the accomplishment of which every kind of impediment was incessantly opposed. The reputed son of a carpenter instructs a few simple fishermen in a new dispensation destitute of worldly incentives, but full of self-denials, sacrifices, and sufferings, and he tells them that in about forty years it should spread over the entire world. It spreads accordingly, and in defiance of the bigotry of the Jews and the authority, power, and active opposition of the Gentiles, it is established, within that period, in all the countries into which it penetrates. Can anyone doubt that the prediction and its fulfillment were equally divine?

[The Beginning of the War]

Such, briefly, is the account that history gives of the several events and signs that our Lord said would precede the destruction of the Holy City. No sooner were his predictions regarding the spread of the Gospel accomplished than a most unaccountable infatuation seized upon the whole Jewish nation so that they not only provoked, but seemed even to rush into the midst of those unparalleled calamities that, at length, totally overwhelmed them. In an essay of this sort, it is impossible to enter into a minute detail of the origin and progress of these evils, but such particulars as illustrate the fulfillment of the remaining part of the prophecy and justify the strong language used shall be presented to the reader.

From the conquest of their country by Pompey, about 60 BC, the Jews had, on several occasions, manifested a refractory spirit. But after Judas the Gaulonite and Sadduc the Pharisee taught them that submission to the Romans would pave the way to a state of abject slavery, this temper displayed itself with increasing malignity and violence. Rebellious tumults and insurrections became more frequent and alarming, and to these, the mercenary Florus, the Roman governor, contributed a great deal. At length, Eleazer, son of the High Priest, persuaded those who officiated in the temple to reject the sacrifices of foreigners and to no longer offer up prayers for them. Thus an insult was thrown upon Caesar, his sacrifice was rejected, and the foundation of the Roman war was laid.

The disturbances among the Jews still continuing, Cestius Gallus, president of Syria, marched an army into Judea in order to quell them, and his career was everywhere marked with blood and desolation. As he proceeded, he plundered and burned the beautiful city of Zabulon, Joppa, and all the villages that lay in his way. At Joppa, he killed 8,400 of the inhabitants. He laid waste the district of Narbatene and, sending an army into Galilee, killed there 2,000 of the seditious Jews. He then burned the city of Lydda, and after repulsing the Jews, who made a desperate attempt against him, he encamped at the distance of about one mile from Jerusalem. On the fourth day, he entered its gate and burned three divisions of the city. He may have, by its capture at that time, put an end to the war, but instead of pursuing his advantages, through the treacherous persuasions of his officers, he most unaccountably raised the siege and fled from the city with great haste.

The Jews, however, pursued him as far as Antipatris and, with little loss to themselves, slew nearly 6,000 men of his army. After this disaster had befallen Cestius, the wealthier Jews (says Josephus) forsook Jerusalem as men do a sinking ship. And it is with reason supposed that, on this occasion, many of the Christians, or converted Jews, who dwelled there—remembering the warnings or their divine Master, retired to Pella, a place beyond Jordan situated in a mountainous country (Matt. 16:22). There (according to Eusebius, who resided near the spot) they came from Jerusalem and settled before the war (under Vespasian) began. Other providential opportunities for escaping afterward occurred, of which, it is probable, those who were now left behind availed themselves. It is a striking act, one that cannot be contemplated by the pious mind without devout

admiration, that history does not record that even one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Enduring to the end and faithful to their blessed master, they gave credit to his predictions and escaped the calamity. Thus were fulfilled the words of our Lord, *"He that shall endure unto the end* (i. e. of the scene of this prophecy) *shall be saved"* (Matt. 24:13) from the calamities that would overtake all those who continued obstinate in unbelief.

[Time to Flee (Matt. 24:15,21)]

Nero, having been informed of the defeat of Cestius, immediately appointed Vespasian, a man of tried valor, to lead the war against the Jews. He, assisted by his son, Titus, soon collected at Ptolemais an army of 60,000 men. From there, in the spring of AD 67, he marched into Judea, everywhere spreading the most cruel havoc and devastation—the Roman soldiers, on various occasions, sparing neither infants nor the aged. For fifteen months, Vespasian proceeded in this sanguinary career, during which period he reduced all the strong towns of Galilee and the chief of those in Judea, destroying at least 150,000 of the inhabitants.

Among the terrible calamities, which at this time happened to the Jews, those that befell them at Joppa, which had been rebuilt, deserve particular notice. Their frequent piracies had provoked the vengeance of Vespasian. The Jews fled before his army to their ships, but a tempest immediately arose and pursued those who had set out to sea, and it capsized them. The rest were dashed, vessel against vessel and against the rocks, in the most tremendous manner. In this way, many were drowned, some were crushed by the broken ships, others killed themselves, and those who reached the shore were slain by the merciless Romans. The sea for a long space was stained with blood; 4,200 dead bodies were strewn along the coast, and (dreadful to relate) not an individual survived to report this great calamity at Jerusalem. Such events were foretold by our Lord, when he said, *"There shall be distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring"* (Luke 21:25).

Vespasian, after proceeding as far as Jericho, returned to Caesarea in order to make preparation for his grand attempt against Jerusalem. While he was thus employed, he received intelligence of the death of Nero. Not knowing what the will of the future emperor might be, he prudently resolved to suspend, for the present, the execution of his design. Thus, the Almighty gave the Jews a second respite, which continued nearly two years. But they did not repent of their crimes; neither were they in the least degree repentant, but rather proceeded to acts of still greater enormity. The flame of civil dissension again burst out and with more dreadful fury.

In the heart of Jerusalem, two factions contended for the sovereignty and raged against each other with ruthless and destructive animosity. A division of one of these factions, having been excluded from the city (*vide* page 26), forcibly entered it during the night. Athirst for blood and inflamed by revenge, they spared neither age, sex, nor infancy, and the morning beheld 8,500 dead bodies lying in the streets of the holy city. They plundered every house, and having found the chief priests, Anaius and Jesus, they not only killed them, but also insulted their bodies by casting them forth unburied. They slaughtered the common people as unfeelingly as if they had been a herd of the vilest beasts. The nobles they first imprisoned and scourged, and when they could not by these means convince them to join their party, they bestowed death upon them as a favor. Of the higher classes, 12,000 perished in this manner. And no one dared to shed a tear or utter a groan openly through fear of a similar fate. Death, indeed, was the penalty of the lightest and heaviest accusations, and none escaped through the lowness of their rank or their poverty. Those who fled were intercepted and slain, and their carcasses lay in heaps on all the public roads. Every symptom of pity seemed utterly extinguished and, with it, all respect for authority, both human and divine.

While Jerusalem was a prey to these ferocious and devouring factions, every part of Judea was scourged and laid waste by bands of robbers and murderers, who plundered the towns. In the case of resistance, they killed the inhabitants, not sparing either women or children. Simon, son of Gioras, the commander of one of these bands of 40,000, with some difficulty entered Jerusalem and gave birth to a third faction. Thus the flame of civil discord blazed out again, with still more destructive fury. The three factions, rendered frantic by drunkenness, rage, and desperation, trampling on heaps of slain people and fought against each other with brutal savageness and madness. Even those who brought sacrifices to the temple were murdered. The dead bodies of priests and worshippers, both natives and foreigners, were heaped together, and a lake of blood stagnated in the sacred courts.

John Levi of Gischala, who headed one of the factions, burnt storehouses full of provisions, and Simon, his great antagonist, who headed another of them, soon afterward followed his example. Thus they cut the very sinews of their own strength. At this critical and alarming conjuncture, intelligence arrived that the Roman army was approaching the city. The Jews were petrified with astonishment and fear; there was no time for counsel, no hope of pacification, no means of flight: all was wild disorder and perplexity. Nothing was to be heard but *"the confused noise of the warrior,"*—nothing to be seen but *"garments rolled in blood,"*—nothing to be expected from the Romans but signal and exemplary vengeance. A ceaseless cry of combatants was heard day and night, and yet the lamentations of mourners were still more dreadful. The consternation and terror that now prevailed induced many inhabitants to desire that a foreign foe might come, and effect their deliverance. Such was the horrible condition of the place when Titus and his army presented themselves and encamped before Jerusalem.

But, alas—he came not to deliver it from its miseries, but to fulfill the prediction and vindicate the benevolent warning of our Lord: *"When ye see* (he had said to his disciples) *the abomination of desolation, spoken or by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, and Jerusalem surrounded by armies* (or camps) *then let those who are in the midst of Jerusalem depart, and let not those who are in the country enter into her,"* for *"then know that the desolation thereof is nigh"* (Matthew 24:15-16; Luke 21:20,1-11). These armies, we do not hesitate to affirm, were those of the Romans, who now filled the city.

From the time of the Babylonian captivity, idolatry had been held as an abomination by the Jews. This national aversion was manifested even against the images of the Roman gods and emperors, which the Roman armies carried in their standards. We see this, in an earlier time of peace, when Pilate, and afterward Vitellius, at the request of some eminent Jews, avoided

marching their forces through Judea because of this very reason. The desolating disposition that now governed the Roman army, the history of the Jewish war, and especially the final demolition of the holy city presents an awful and signal example. Jerusalem was not captured merely, but with its celebrated temple laid in ruins.

Lest, however, the army of Titus should not be sufficiently designated by this expression, our Lord adds, *"Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together"* (Matt. 24:28 ASV). The Jewish state, indeed, at this time, was fitly compared to a carcass. The scepter of Judah—its civil and political authority, the life of its religion, and the glory of its temple—were departed. It was, in short, morally and judicially dead. The eagle whose ruling instinct is rapine and murder, fitly represented the fierce and sanguinary temper of the Romans, and perhaps, it might be intended to refer also to the principal image on their ensigns, which, however obnoxious to the Jews, were at length planted in the midst of the holy city and finally on the temple itself.

The day on which Titus encompassed Jerusalem was the feast of the Passover, and it is worth noting that this was the anniversary of that memorable period in which the Jews crucified their Messiah! At this season, multitudes came up from all the surrounding country, and from distant parts, to keep the festival. How suitable and how kind, then, was the prophetic admonition of our Lord when he said, *"Let not them that are in the countries enter into Jerusalem"* (Luke 21:21).

[Like Lightening (Matt. 24:27)]

Nevertheless, the city was at this time crowded with Jewish strangers and foreigners from all parts so that the whole nation may be considered as having been shut up in one prison prior to the execution of the Divine vengeance. According to Josephus, this event took place suddenly, thus, not only fulfilling the predictions of our Lord that these calamities should come like the swift-darting lightning *"that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the West,"* and *"as a snare on all of them* (the Jews) *who dwelt upon the face of the whole earth"* (Matt. 24:27; Luke 21:35), but justifying, also, his friendly direction that those who fled from the place should use the utmost possible expedition.

[Woe to the Pregnant (Matt. 24:19)]

On the appearance of the Roman army, the factious Jews united and, rushing furiously out of the city, repulsed the tenth legion, which was with difficulty preserved. This event caused a short suspension of hostilities and, by opening the gates, gave an opportunity to those who were so disposed to make their escape. Before this they could not have attempted an escape without interruption because it would have caused suspicion that they wished to join the Romans.

This success inspired the Jews with confidence, and they resolved to defend their city to the very uttermost, but it did not prevent the renewal of their civil broils. The faction under Eleazer had dispersed and arranged themselves under the two other leaders, **John Levi** and Simon, and afterward ensued a scene of the most dreadful contention, plunder, and conflagration. The middle space of the city was burnt, and the wretched inhabitants were made the prize of the contending parties.

The Romans, at length, gained possession of two of the three walls that defended the city, and fear once more united the factions. This pause to their fury had, however, scarcely begun when famine made its ghastly appearance in the Jewish army. It had for some time been silently approaching, and many of the peaceful and the poor had already perished for want of necessaries. With this new calamity, strange to relate, the madness of the factions again returned, and the city presented a new picture of wretchedness. Impelled by the cravings of hunger, they snatched food out of each other's hands, and many devoured grain unprepared.

Tortures were inflicted for the discovery of a handful of meal; women forced food from their husbands and children from their fathers and even mothers from their infants; while sucking children were wasting away in their arms, they scrupled not to take away the vital drops that sustained them! So justly did our Lord pronounce a woe on *"them that should give suck in those days"* (Matt. 24:19). This dreadful scourge at length drove multitudes of the Jews out of the city into the enemy's camp, where the Romans crucified them in such numbers that, as Josephus relates, space was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the captives. When it was discovered that some of them had swallowed gold, the Arabs and Syrians, who were incorporated into the Roman army, impelled by avarice, with unexampled cruelty, ripped open two thousand of the deserters in one night.

Titus, touched by these calamities, in person entreated the Jews to surrender, but they answered him with reviling. Exasperated by their obstinacy and insolence, he resolved to surround the city by a circumvallation (a trench of 39 furlongs in circuit and strengthened with 13 towers), which with astonishing activity was effected by the soldiers in three days. Thus was fulfilled another of our Lord's predictions, for he had said, while addressing this devoted city, *"Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side"* (Luke 19:43).

As no supplies whatever could now enter the walls, the famine rapidly extended itself and, increasing in horror, devoured whole families. The tops of houses and the recesses of the city were covered with the carcasses of women, children, and aged men. The young men appeared like specters in the places of public resort and fell down lifeless in the streets. The dead were too numerous to be interred, and many died while burying others. The public calamity was too great for lamentation. Silence and, as it were, a black and deadly night overspread the city.

But even such a scene could not awe the robbers; they spoiled the tombs and stripped the dead of their grave clothes with an unfeeling and wild laughter. They tried the edges of their swords on the carcasses and even on some that were yet breathing. Simon Goras chose this melancholy and awful period to manifest the deep malignity and cruelty of his nature in the execution of the Priest, Matthias, and his three sons, whom he caused to be condemned as favorers of the Romans. The father, in consideration of his having opened the city gates to Simon, begged that he might be executed previously to his children, but the unfeeling tyrant gave orders that he should be dispatched in the last place, and in his expiring moments, Simon insultingly asked him whether the Romans could then relieve him.

While the city was in this dismal situation, a Jew named Mannæus fled to Titus and informed him that from the beginning of the siege (the 14th of April) to the first of July following, 115,880 dead bodies had been carried through one gate only, which he had guarded. This man had been appointed to pay the public allowance for carrying the bodies out, and was, therefore, obliged to register them. Soon after, several respectable individuals deserted to the Romans and assured Titus that the whole number of the poor who had been cast out at the different gates was not less than 600,000. The report of these calamities excited pity in the Romans and in a particular manner affected Titus, who, while surveying the immense number of dead bodies that were piled raised his hands toward Heaven and, appealing to the Almighty, solemnly protested that he had not been the cause of these deplorable calamities. Indeed, the Jews, by their unexampled wickedness, rebellion, and obstinacy, had brought it down upon their own heads.

After this, Josephus, in the name of Titus, earnestly exhorted **John Levi** and his adherents to surrender, but the insolent rebel returned nothing but reproaches and imprecations, declaring his firm persuasion that Jerusalem, as it was God's own city, could never be taken. Thus he literally fulfilled the declaration of Micah that the Jews, in their extremity, notwithstanding their crimes, would presumptuously *"lean upon the Lord, and say, 'Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us"* (Micah 3:11).

Meanwhile the horrors of famine grew still more melancholy and afflictive. The Jews, for want of food, were at length compelled to eat their belts, their sandals, the skins of their shields, dried grass, and even the manure of oxen. In the depth or this horrible extremity, a Jewess of noble family, urged by the intolerable cravings of hunger, slew her infant child and prepared him for a meal. She had actually eaten one half thereof when the soldiers, allured by the smell of food, threatened her with instant death if she refused to reveal it. Intimidated by this menace, she immediately produced the remains of her son, which petrified them with horror. At the recital of this melancholy and affecting occurrence, the whole city stood aghast and poured forth their congratulations on those whom death had hurried away from such heartrending scenes.

Indeed, humanity at once shudders and sickens at the narration. Nor can any one of the least sensibility reflect upon the pitiable condition to which the female inhabitants of Jerusalem must have been reduced without experiencing the tenderest emotions of sympathy. Nor can he refrain from tears while he reads our Savior's pathetic address to the women who *"bewailed him"* as he was led to Calvary, wherein he evidently refers to these very calamities: *"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck"* (Luke 23:29).

The above melancholy fact was also literally foretold by Moses: *"The tender and delicate women among barbarian,* (said he, addressing Israel) *who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil....toward her young one....which she shall bear,"* and *"eat for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates"* (Deut. 28:56-57). This prediction was partially fulfilled, when Samaria, the capital of the revolted tribes, was besieged by Benhadad, and afterward at Jerusalem, previous to its capture by Nebuchadnezzar. But its exact and literal fulfillment, in relation to a lady of rank, who was delicately and voluptuously educated, was reserved for the period of which we are now speaking.

And it is important to note—as a circumstance that very greatly enhances the importance of this prophecy—that the history of the world does not record a parallel instance of unnatural barbarity ever occurring during the siege of any other place in any other age or nation whatsoever. Indeed, Josephus himself declared that, if there had not been many credible witnesses of the fact, he would not have recorded it, "because," as he remarks, "such a shocking violation of nature never having been perpetuated by any Greek or barbarian," the insertion of it might have diminished the credibility of his history.

While famine continued thus to spread its destructive rage through the city, the Romans, after many ineffectual attempts, at length succeeded in demolishing part of the inner wall, possessed themselves of the great tower of Antonia, and advanced toward the Temple, which Titus, in a council of war, had determined to preserve as an ornament to the empire and as a monument of his success. But the Almighty had determined otherwise. Now, in the revolution of ages, had arrived that fatal day (the 10th of August) emphatically called *"a day of vengeance"* (Luke 21:21), on which the Temple had formerly been destroyed by the king of Babylon.

A Roman soldier, urged, as he declared, by a divine impulse, regardless of the command of Titus, climbed on the shoulders of another and threw a flaming brand into the golden window of the Temple, which instantly set the building on fire. The Jews, anxious above all things to save that sacred edifice in which they superstitiously trusted for security, with a dreadful outcry, rushed in to extinguish the flames. Titus also, hoping to extinguish the conflagration, hastened to the spot in his chariot, attended by his principal officers and legions. But in vain he waved his hand and raised his voice, commanding his soldiers to extinguish the fire; so great was the uproar and confusion that no attention was paid even to him. The Romans, willfully deaf, instead of extinguishing the flames spread them wider and wider.

Compelled by the fiercest impulses of rancor and revenge against the Jews, they rushed furiously upon them, slaying some with the sword, trampling others under their feet, or crushing them to death against the walls. Many, falling amongst the smoking ruins of the porches and galleries, were suffocated. The unarmed poor and even sick people were slaughtered without mercy. Of these unhappy people, numbers were left weltering in their gore. Multitudes of the dead and dying were heaped round about the altar, to which they had formerly fled for protection, while the steps that led from it into the outer court were literally deluged with their blood.

Finding it impossible to restrain the impetuosity and cruelty of his soldiers, the commander-in-chief proceeded, with some of his superior officers, to take a survey of those parts of the edifice that were still uninjured by the conflagration. It had not, at that time, reached the inner Temple, which Titus entered and viewed with silent admiration. Struck with the magnificence of its

architecture and the beauty of its decorations, which even surpassed the report of fame concerning them, and perceiving that the sanctuary had not yet caught fire, he redoubled his efforts to stop the progress of the flames. He condescended even to entreat his soldiers to exert all their strength and activity for this purpose, and he appointed a centurion of the guards to punish them if they again disregarded him. But all was in vain.

The delirious rage of the soldiery knew no bounds. Eager for plunder and for slaughter, they alike ignored the solicitations and menaces of their general. Even while he was thus intent upon the preservation of the sanctuary, one of the soldiers was actually employed in setting fire to the doorposts, which caused the conflagration to become general. Titus and his officers were now compelled to retire, and none remained to check the fury of the soldiers or the flames. The Romans, exasperated to the highest pitch against the Jews, seized every person whom they could find and, without the least regard to sex, age, or quality, first plundered and then slew them. The old and the young, the common people and the priests, those who surrendered and those who resisted, were equally involved in this horrible and indiscriminate carnage.

Meanwhile, the Temple continued burning, until at length, vast as was its size, the flames completely enveloped the whole building. Thus the extent of the fire impressed the distant spectator with an idea that the whole city was now on fire. The tumult and disorder that ensued upon this event, it is impossible (says Josephus) for language to describe. The Roman legions made the most horrid outcries; the rebels, finding themselves exposed to the fury of both fire and sword, screamed dreadfully; while the unhappy people, who were pent up between the enemy and the flames, deplored their situation in the most pitiable complaints. Those on the hill and those in the city seemed mutually to return the groans of each other. Such as were expiring through famine, were revived by this hideous scene and seemed to acquire new spirits to deplore their misfortunes. The lamentations from the city were re-echoed from the adjacent mountains and places beyond Jordan. The flames, which enveloped the Temple, were so violent and impetuous that the lofty hill on which it stood appeared, even from its deep foundations, as one large body of fire.

The blood of the sufferers flowed in proportion to the rage of this destructive element, and the number of the slain exceeded all calculation. The ground could not be seen for the dead bodies, over which the Romans trampled in pursuit of the fugitives, while the crackling noise of the devouring flames mingled with the clamor of arms, the groans of the dying, and the shrieks of despair increased the tremendous horror of a scene to which the pages of history can furnish no parallel.

Among the tragic events that at this time occurred, the following is more particularly deserving of notice: A false prophet, pretending to be a divine commission, said that if the people would flee to the Temple, they should behold signs of their speedy deliverance. Accordingly, about six thousand people, chiefly women and children, assembled in a gallery that was yet standing, on the outside of the building. While they waited in anxious expectation of the promised miracle, the Romans, with the most wanton barbarity, set fire to the gallery. Multitudes, rendered frantic by their horrible situation, threw themselves from the gallery onto the ruins below and were killed by the fall. Meanwhile, awful to relate, the rest, without a single exception, perished in the flames. So necessary was our Lord's second premonition not to give credit to *"false prophets"* who should pretend *"to show great signs and wonders."*

The Temple now presented little more than a heap of ruins. The Roman army, as in triumph on the event, came and reared their ensigns against a fragment of the eastern gate, and with sacrifices of thanksgiving, they proclaimed the imperial majesty of Titus with every possible demonstration of joy.

Thus ended the glory and existence of the sacred and venerable Temple, which from its stupendous size, its massy solidity, and its astonishing strength, seemed formed to resist the most violent operations of human force and to stand, like the pyramids, amid the shocks of successive ages until the final dissolution of the globe.

For five days after the destruction of the Temple, the priests who had escaped sat, pining with hunger, on the top of one of its broken walls; at length they came down and humbly asked the pardon of Titus, which, however, he refused to grant them, saying that, "as the Temple, for the sake of which he would have spared them, was destroyed, it was but fit that its priests should perish also"—whereupon he commanded that they should be put to death.

The leaders of the factions, who were now pressed on all sides, begged a conference with Titus, who offered to spare their lives if they would lay down their arms. To this reasonable condition, however, they refused to comply. In response, Titus, exasperated by their obstinacy, resolved that he would hereafter grant no pardon to the insurgents and ordered a proclamation to be made to this effect. The Romans had now full license to ravage and destroy. Early the following morning, they set fire to the castle, the register office, the council chamber, and the palace of the queen Helena, and then they spread themselves throughout the city, slaughtering wherever they came *and burning the dead bodies that were scattered over every street and on the floors of almost every house.*

In the royal palace, where immense treasures were deposited, the seditious Jews murdered 8,400 of their own people and afterward plundered their property. Prodigious numbers of deserters, also, who had escaped from the tyrants and fled into the enemy's camp, were slain.

The soldiers, however, at length, weary of killing and satiated with the blood that they had spilt, laid down their swords and sought to gratify avarice. For this purpose, they took the Jews, together with their wives and families, and publicly sold them, like cattle in a market. A very multitude were exposed to sale, while the purchasers were few in number. And now were fulfilled the words of Moses: *"And ye shall be sold for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you"* (Deut. 28:68).

The Romans, having become masters of the lower city, set it on fire. The Jews now fled to the higher, from whence, their pride and insolence yet unabated, they continued to exasperate their enemies and even appeared to view the burning of the town below them with tokens of pleasure. In a short time, however, the walls of the higher city were demolished by the Roman engines, and the Jews, lately so haughty and presumptuous, were now trembling and panic-struck, and they fell on their faces

and deplored their own arrogance. Those who were in the towers, which were deemed impregnable to human force, were beyond measure afraid, and they strangely forsook the towers and sought refuge in caverns and subterraneous passages. In these dismal retreats, no less than 2,000 dead bodies were afterward found. Thus, as our Lord had predicted, did these miserable creatures, in effect, say *"to the mountains, 'Fall on us;' and to the rocks, 'Cover us'"* (Luke 23:20).

Since the walls of the city were now completely in the possession of the Romans, they hoisted their colors upon the towers and burst forth into the most triumphant acclamations. After this, all annoyance from the Jews being at an end, the soldiers gave an unbridled license to their fury against the inhabitants. They first plundered and then set fire to the houses. They ranged through the streets with drawn swords in their hands, murdering every Jew whom they met, without distinction, till at length, the bodies of the dead choked up all the alleys and narrow passes while their blood literally flowed down the channels of the city in streams. As it drew toward evening, the soldiers exchanged the sword for the torch, and amidst the darkness of this awful night, they set fire to the remaining divisions of the place.

The vial of divine wrath, which had been so long pouring out upon this devoted city, was now emptying, and Jerusalem, once "a praise in all the earth" and the subject of a thousand prophecies, which was deprived of the staff of life, wrapped in flames, and bleeding on every side, finally sunk into utter ruin and desolation. (This memorable siege terminated on the 8th day of September, AD 70. Its duration was nearly five months, the Romans having invested the city on the 14th day of the preceding April.)

Before their final demolition, however, Titus took a survey of the city and its fortifications, and while contemplating their impregnable strength, he could not help ascribing his success to the Almighty himself. "Had not God himself (exclaimed he) aided out operations, and driven the Jews from their fortresses, it would have been absolutely impossible to have taken them; for what could men, and the force of engines, have done against such towers as these?" After this he commanded that the city should be razed to its foundations, excepting only the three lofty towers Hippocos, Phasael, and Mariamne, which he suffered to remain as evidences of its strength and as trophies of his victory. There was left standing, also, a small part of the western wall, as a rampart for a garrison, to keep the surrounding country in subjection.

Titus now gave orders that only those Jews who resisted should be slain, but the soldiers, equally void of pity and remorse, slew even the sick and the aged. The robbers and seditious were all punished with death. The tallest and most beautiful youths, together with several of the Jewish nobles, were reserved by Titus to grace his triumphal entry into Rome. After this selection, all above the age of seventeen were sent in chains into Egypt to be employed there as slaves or distributed throughout the empire to be sacrificed as gladiators in the amphitheaters; those who were under this age were exposed to sale.

During the time that these things were transacted, 11,000 Jews, guarded by one of the generals, named Fronto, were literally starved to death. This melancholy occurrence happened partly through the scarcity of provisions and partly through their own obstinacy and the negligence of the Romans.

Of the Jews destroyed during the siege, Josephus reckons not less than one million and one hundred thousand, to which must be added above 237,000 who perished in other places and innumerable multitudes who were swept away by famine and pestilence and of which no calculation could be made. Not less than 2,000 laid violent hands upon themselves. Of the captives, the whole was about 97,000. Of the two great leaders of the Jews, who had both been made prisoners, **John Levi** was doomed to a dungeon for life, while Simon, together with **John Levi**, in triumph at Rome was scourged, and Simon was put to death as a malefactor.

In executing the command of Titus regarding the demolition of Jerusalem, the Roman soldiers not only threw down the buildings, but even dug up their foundations. They so completely leveled the whole circuit of the city that a stranger would scarcely have known that it had ever been inhabited by human beings. Thus was this great city, which only five months before had been crowded with nearly two million people, who gloried in its impregnable strength, entirely depopulated and leveled to the ground. Thus also was our Lord's prediction that her enemies should *"lay her even with the ground,"* and *"should not leave in her one stone upon another"* (Luke 19:44) most strikingly and fully accomplished!

This fact is confirmed by Eusebius, who asserts that he himself saw the city lying in ruins, and Josephus introduces Eleazer as exclaiming, "Where is our great city, which, it was believed, GOD inhabited? It is altogether rooted and torn up from its foundations, and the only monument of it that remains, is the camp of its destroyers pitched amidst its relics!"

Concerning the Temple, our Lord foretold particularly that, notwithstanding their wonderful dimensions, there should *"not be left one stone upon another that should not be thrown down;"* (Matt. 24:2). Accordingly, it is recorded, in the Talmud and by Maimonides that Terentius Rufus, captain of the army of Titus, absolutely ploughed up the foundations of the Temple with a ploughshare. Now, also, was literally fulfilled that prophecy of Micah—*"Therefore shall Zion, for your sakes* (i. e. for your wickedness,) *be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord's house as the high places of the forest"* (Micah 3:12).

Thus awfully complete and beyond example were the calamities which befell the Jewish nation and especially the city of Jerusalem. With what truth, then, did our Lord declare that there should *"be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be!"* (Matt. 24:21).

Such was the prediction, and the language in which Josephus declares its fulfillment is an exact counterpart to it: "If the misfortunes," says he, "of all nations, from the beginning of the world, were compared with those which befell the Jews, they would appear far less in comparison." And again he says, "No other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation, from the beginning of the world, was ever more fruitful in wickedness." These were, indeed, *"the days of vengeance,"* that all things that are written (especially by Moses, Joel, and Daniel) might be fulfilled (Luke 21:2).

Nor were the calamities of this ill-fated nation even now ended. There were still other places to subdue, and our Lord had thus predicted, *"wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together"* (Matt. 24:28). After the destruction of Jerusalem, 1,700 Jews who surrendered at Macherus were slain, and of fugitives, not less than 3,000 were killed in the wood of Jardes. Titus, having marched his army to Caesarea, there with great splendor celebrated the birthday of his brother, Domitian. And according to the barbarous manner of those times, he punished many Jews in honor of it. The number who were burned and who fell by fighting with wild beasts and in mutual combats exceeded 2,500.

At the siege of Massada, Eleazer, the Jewish commander, instigated the garrison to burn their stores and to destroy first the women and children and then themselves. Dreadful as it is to relate, this horrid design was executed. They were in number 960. Ten were chosen to perform the bloody work: The rest sat on the ground and, embracing their wives and children, stretched out their necks to the sword. One was afterward appointed to destroy the remaining nine and then himself. The survivor, when he had looked round to see that all were slain, set fire to the place and plugged his sword into his own bosom. Nevertheless, two women and five children successfully concealed themselves and witnessed the whole transaction. When the Romans advanced to the attack in the morning, one of the women gave them a distinct account of this melancholy affair and struck them with amazement at the contempt of death that had been displayed by the Jews.

After this event, if we exclude the transitory insurrection of the Sicarii under Jonathan, all opposition on the part of the Jews everywhere ceased. It was the submission of impotence and despair. The peace that ensued was the effect of the direst necessity. The rich territory of Judea was converted into a desolate waste. Everywhere ruin and desolation presented itself to the solitary passenger, and a melancholy and death-like silence reigned over the whole region. The mournful and desolate condition of Judea, at this time, is exactly described by the prophet Isaiah, in the following of his prophecies: *"The cities were without inhabitant, and the houses without a man, and the land was utterly desolate, and the LORD had removed men far away, and there was a great forsaking in the midst of the land"* (Isa. 6:11-12).

The catastrophe which has now been reviewed cannot but be deemed one of the most extraordinary that has happened since the foundation of the world. As it has pleased the Almighty to make it the subject of a very large proportion of the prophecies, both of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, so he has ordained that the particular events which accomplished them should be recorded with very remarkable precision and by a man most singularly preserved, qualified, and circumstanced for this purpose.

But with respect to this latter point, he shall speak for himself: "At first," says Josephus, "I fought against the Romans, but was afterwards forced to be present in the Roman camp. At the time I surrendered, Vespasian and Titus kept me in bonds, but obliged me to attend them continually. Afterwards I was set at liberty, and accompanied Titus when he came from Alexandria to the siege of Jerusalem. During this time nothing was done that escaped my knowledge. What happened in the Roman camp I saw, and wrote down carefully. As to the information the deserters brought out of the city, I was the only man that understood it. Afterwards I got leisure at Rome; and when all my materials were prepared, I procured the help of one to assist me in writing Greek. Thus I composed the history of those transactions, and I appealed both to Titus and Vespasian for the truth of it; to which also Julius Archelaus, Herod, and king Agrippa, bore their testimony."

All remark here is needless, but it should not be forgotten that Josephus was a Jew, obstinately attached to his religion, and that, although he has circumstantially related every remarkable event of that period, he seems studiously to have avoided such as had any reference to Jesus Christ, whose history he sums up in about twelve written lines. No one, therefore, can reasonably entertain a suspicion that the service he has rendered to Christianity, by his narrative of the transactions of the Jewish war, was at all the effect of design. The fidelity of Josephus as an historian is, indeed, universally admitted, and Scaliger even affirms that, not only in the affairs of the Jews, but in those of foreign nations also, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together.

Nor is the peculiar character of Titus, the chief commander in this war, unworthy of our particular regard. Vespasian, his father, had risen out of obscurity and was elected emperor, contrary to his avowed inclination, about the commencement of the conflict. Thus the chief command devolved upon Titus, the most unlikely man throughout the Roman armies to become a scourge to Jerusalem. He was eminently distinguished for his great tenderness and humanity, which he displayed in a variety of instances during the siege. He repeatedly made pacific overtures to the Jews and deeply lamented the infatuation that rejected them. In short, he did everything that a military commander could do to spare them and to preserve their city and temple, but without effect. Thus was the will of God accomplished by Titus, although contrary to the wish of Titus, and God's predicted interposition to punish his rebellious and apostate people, in this way, was rendered more conspicuously evident.

The history of the Jews, subsequently to the time of Josephus, still further corroborates the truth of our Savior's prophecies concerning that oppressed and persecuted people. Into this inquiry, however, the limits of the present essay will not allow us to enter particularly. Our Lord foretold, generally, that they should *"fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations; and that Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled"* (Luke 21:24), and these predictions may be regarded as a faithful epitome of the circumstances of the Jews and also of their city, from the period in which it was delivered down even to our own times.